Feb. 11, 1991

# THE NEW YORKER

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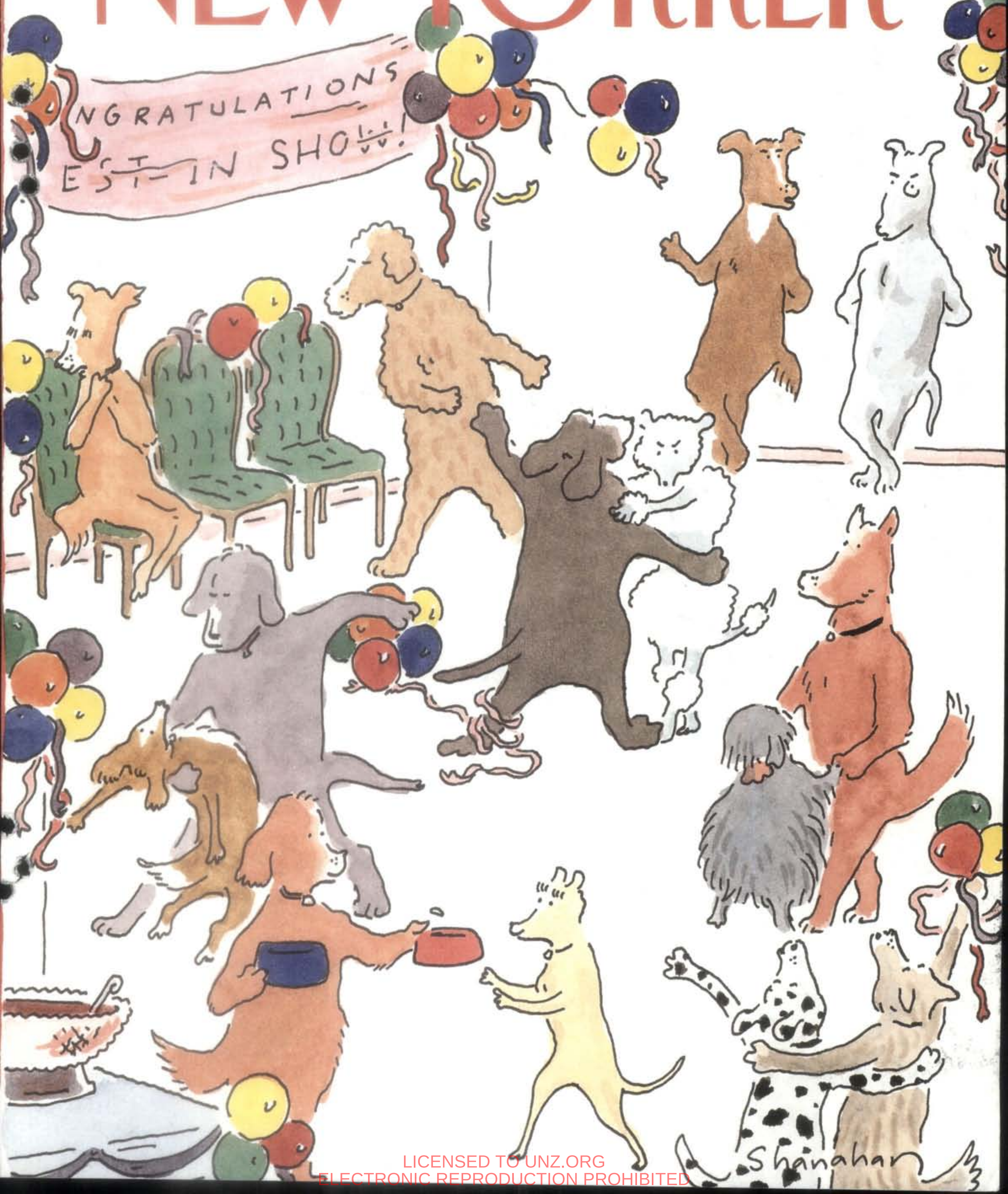
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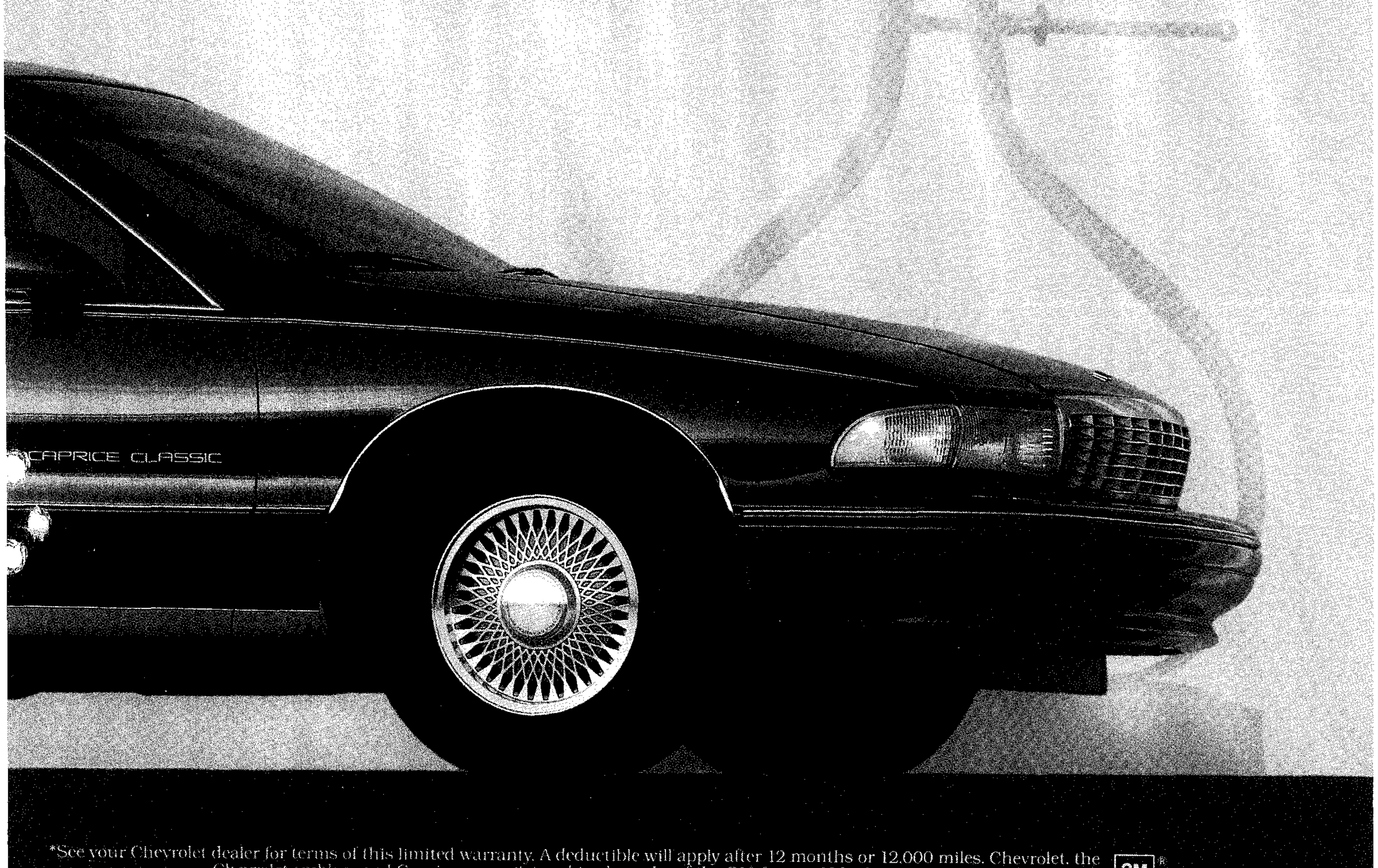

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THE NEW YORKER
25 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
(212) 840-3800

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and general manager/cfo; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and associate publisher; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing; Martha Kaplan, vice-president. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXVI, No. 52, February 11, 1991. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian goods and services tax registration number R123242885. © 1991 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $56.00. Other foreign, one year, $66.00, payable in advance.
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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE THEATRE

FOR a theatre company to devote itself to a single playwright isn't so unusual—think of Shakespeare, for starters. For a group to focus each year primarily on the work of a *contemporary* playwright, however, and not in "festival" form but as part of an ongoing artistic process—now that strikes us as radical. Yet such is the purpose of the Signature Theatre Company, whose production schedule is still germinating but whose goals are fully formed. "We aim to focus on one playwright at a time, so we really have a chance to explore his or her body of work," Jim Houghton, Signature's artistic director, told us recently. "And we have the perfect person with whom to begin—Romulus Linney." What led Houghton and his company to Linney? "Well, I was in one of Romulus's plays several years ago, and I didn't understand why his work wasn't done more often in New York. He's known for his plays about mountain people, but his other work has been overlooked." The Signature's season, which will include productions of five full-length plays and a handful of one-acts—many directed by the playwright himself—should help correct that situation. The season doesn't move into full gear until September, with a staging of "The Sorrows of Frederick," but as a jump-starter the company will produce "F.M.," a Linney one-act about a creative-writing class, in its home space, the Kampo Cultural Center (31 Bond Street), in May.

Linney lovers do not have to wait until spring for a fix. The Triangle Theatre Company is currently presenting the New York première of the playwright's "Unchanging Love," directed by John Dillon, at the Church of the Holy Trinity (316 East 88th Street; through February 24). The setting is Appalachia; the year is 1921; the protagonists are two families, the Pitmans and the Musgroves. The playwright's inspiration here was "In the Hollow," a short story by Chekhov—an author who, given his ubiquity lately, doesn't need a champion.

*Alan Ayckbourn, author of "Absent Friends" and "Taking Steps"*

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

**ABSENT FRIENDS**—The New York première of a 1975 comedy by the British playwright Alan Ayckbourn. Lynne Meadow directed. Gillian Anderson, Peter Frechette, Ellen Parker, and David Purdham make up the cast. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

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**LA BÊTE**—Tom McGowan stars in this comedy by David Hirson, which is written entirely in verse. Richard Jones directed; Richard Hudson was the designer. Previews through Feb. 9. Opens Feb. 10 at 7. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

**EARTH AND SKY**—A play by Douglas Post, directed by André Ernotte. Jennifer Van Dyck and Justin Deas lead the cast. Opens Feb. 4 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

**HENRY IV, PARTS I AND II**—The sixteenth and seventeenth plays in the Public's Shakespeare Marathon, both directed by JoAnne Akalaitis, will run in repertory through March 31. Both are in previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

**LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**—A 1976 play by Caryl Churchill, presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Previews through Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

**LOST IN YONKERS**—Neil Simon's new play, starring Irene Worth, Mercedes Ruehl, and Kevin Spacey; directed by Gene Saks. Previews begin on Feb. 12. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

**MANHATTAN PUNCH LINE**—Presenting a festival of new one-act comedies. Program A: "Variations on the Death of Trotsky," by David Ives; "Gorgo's Mother," by Laurence Klavan; "Gangster Apparel," by Richard Vetere; and "Stay Carl Stay," by Peter Tolan. Previews Feb. 7-8. Opens Feb. 9 at 6:45. . . . ¶ Program B: "The Experts," by Bill Bozzone; "Foreplay," by David Ives; "The Staged Reading," by Michael Panes; "Mailman," by Matthew Carnahan; and "The Christmas Rules," by Craig Wright. Previews Feb. 5-6 and Feb. 10-11. Opens Feb. 12 at 6:45. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**MULE BONE**—The première of a never-produced 1930 collaboration between Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. Directed by Michael Schultz. With Akosua Busia, Kenny Neal, and Eric Ware. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

**THE MY HOUSE PLAY**—A comedy by Wendy MacLeod. With Jayce Bartok, Lewis J. Stadlen, Welker White, and others. Previews Feb. 5-6. Opens Feb. 7 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

**TAKING STEPS**—Another comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, this one from 1979. With Christopher Benjamin, Bill Buell, Jonathan Hogan, Spike McClure, Pippa Pearthree, and Jane Summerhays; directed by Alan Strachan. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

**AN UNFINISHED SONG**—A new musical with a book, a score, and lyrics by James J. Mellon. Previews Feb. 5-9. Opens Feb. 10 at 7. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048.)

### RECENTLY OPENED

**ASSASSINS**—Stephen Sondheim's new musical, with a book by John Weidman; directed by Jerry Zaks. The cast includes Victor Garber, Annie Golden, Jonathan Hadary, and Debra Monk. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 16.)

**BETTER DAYS**—A play by Richard Dresser, presented by the Primary Stages theatre company. With Daniel Ahearn, James Gleason, Susan Greenhill, and others. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471. Closes Feb. 16.)

**BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY**—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/19/90.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**CAMILLE, A TEARJERKER**—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

**CARREÑO**—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross and directed by Ge[illegible] Frankel. Most performances are in English, [illegible] few are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**THE COUNTRY GIRL**—A first-rate revival of the Odets play, with David Rasche as the bibulous star, Karen Allen as his steadfast wife, and Paul McCrane as the misguided director. (1/21/91) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Feb. 10.)

**THE DANCE OF DEATH**—Strindberg's play, in a translation by Harry G. Carlson. With Joanne Camp, Richard Fancy, Janet Kingsley, and Paul O'Brien. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Feb. 16.)

**DEAD MOTHER, OR SHIRLEY NOT ALL IN VAIN**—David Greenspan's work of campy frolic (and long, unbroken speeches) is a total bore. Mr. Greenspan appears, for some cloudy purpose, as a young man disguised as his late mother. (Closes Feb. 10.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

**GROWN UPS**—A revival of Jules Feiffer's 1981 play. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Feb. 10.)

**IN MIAMI AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**—A play by Raul de Cárdenas. Three performances a week are in English, and four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

**JACKIE MASON: BRAND NEW**—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

**JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY**—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** and Georg Büchner's **WOYZECK,** which was adapted by Eric Bentley. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

**LET ME LIVE**—OyamO's dynamic, poetic play is set in a jail in Georgia in 1932, and its hero is a black labor organizer, wrongly convicted, who is determined to get out. Randy Frazier heads the excellent company, which was directed by Bill Mitchelson. Music composed and directed by Olu Dara. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**LYNDON**—Lyndon Johnson, in the person [illegible] Laurence Luckinbill, wanders around the Oval Office reviewing (and justifying) his political career. He is convincing most of the time, both dramatically and historically, and this one-man show is more interesting than most. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes Feb. 17.)

**MAMBO MOUTH**—John Leguizamo's one-man show. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

**MONSTER IN A BOX**—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Mondays and occasional Sundays, through Feb. 25.)

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**ROMEO AND JULIET**—A brawling, rackety production in which many of the words go by the

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## THE THEATRE–Cont'd

board and many of the characters are blurred. Exceptions must be made of Miriam Healy-Louie, a true Juliet, who is fresh, beautiful, ardent, and funny, and of Lynnda Ferguson as Lady Capulet, Peggy Pope as the nurse, and Omar Carter as Benvolio. The misbegotten performance was directed by Bill Alexander, on temporary loan from the Royal Shakespeare Company. (Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

**SHADOWLANDS**—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film about C. S. Lewis that he wrote for the BBC is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that in the movie was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

**SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION**—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

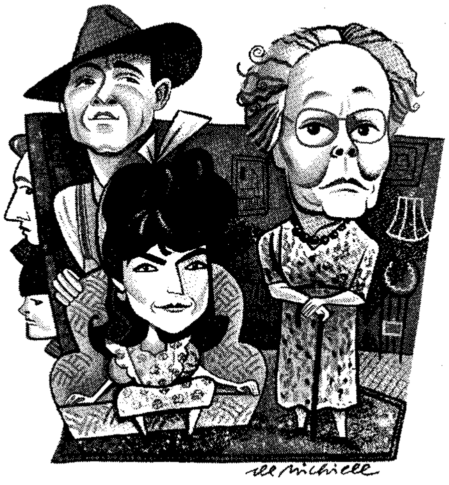
**THE SUM OF US**—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed, but cast and direction are both excellent. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

**THOSE WERE THE DAYS**—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

**WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE**—A double bill of plays by H. M. Koutoukas: "Awful People Are Coming Over So We Must Be Pretending to Be Hard at Work and Hope They Will Go Away" and "Only a Countess May Dance When She's Crazy." With Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

### LONG RUNS

**ASPECTS OF LOVE:** Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cars or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-check salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. Rene Ceballos, David Carroll, Lynnette Perry, Chip Zien, Timothy Jerome, John Wylie, and Caitlin Brown make up the cast. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. With J. Mark McVey as Jean Valjean. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. With Kevin Grey as the Phantom and Kare[illegible] Culliver as Christine. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **PRELUDE TO A KISS:** Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.) . . . **THE ROTHSCHILDS:** A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock, Sheld[illegible] Harnick, and Sherman Yellen. Directed by Lonny Price. Starring Mike Burstyn. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)



*Kevin Spacey, Mercedes Ruehl, and Irene Worth in "Lost in Yonkers"*

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### PLANTING STAGES

*The shape of Bryant Park to come is now visible, although the site will not lose its chain-link fence or officially open for nearly a year. A thirty-five-foot-deep crater was dug last year in the park's center, so that the New York Public Library could add eighty-four miles' worth of stacks, but no trace of that excavation remains. New flagstones and green-slatted benches line the park's walkways, London Plane trees stand at regular intervals along classical balustrades, and, according to garden designer Lynden Miller, "two of the largest mixed herbaceous borders in the country" have been planted at the north and south sides of the lawn: some three hundred and sixty shrubs and thirty-five patches of ornamental grass are now in place.*

*Bryant Park has been transformed many times before. Olmstedian meandering paths were laid there in 1911, and in 1934 Robert Moses replaced those organic shapes with the present crisp square lawn surrounded by sycamore allées. From 1885 to 1955, statues of literary, social, and business figures (Goethe, Brazilian statesman José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva,* Evening Post *editor William Cullen Bryant, and metal magnate William Earl Dodge) were erected around the park. The statues will not change appearance or position during the ongoing overhaul, so if you peer through the fence you can still spot Bryant at his customary post. He's settled in a bronze chair at the rear of the library, comfortably watching over his property's rebirth.*

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## DANCE

THE role of the Father in Balanchine's "Prodigal Son" doesn't give a performer much active material with which to impress himself upon an audience. The character has a couple of entrances from a tent; he kneels to bind his family in prayer; he stands and watches his penitent heir creep toward him on crippled legs. The Father is more important for what he represents than for what he does, and his potency as a symbol increases according to the severity of his self-restraint as an actor. Over the past few years, New York City Ballet audiences have seen several individuals take on this role; for many people, however, the part has come to be identified with soloist Shaun O'Brien. There is not a smidgen of pathos in Mr. O'Brien's portrayal—no softening toward the Son, no facial clues to emotion at all—and there is no attempt to puff up the Father's presence. Mr. O'Brien cuts the patriarch's early gestures with flawless strokes. Later, when the Son crawls home, Mr. O'Brien is living stone. He gives the Son a double pilgrimage to complete: one to the Father's person, and another, more arduous one to his heart.

On Friday, February 8, this uncompromising artist will give his last performance as a member of City Ballet, playing Dr. Coppelius in "Coppélia." Mr. O'Brien, who has been with the company for forty-two years, as both a dancer and a mime, had many discussions with Balanchine about his ballets. We asked him to speak about "Prodigal Son."

"When I first learned the role of the Father at City Center, Balanchine went into a lot of explanation," Mr. O'Brien said. "He told me that when he was working on the ballet he had visited a synagogue in Berlin and

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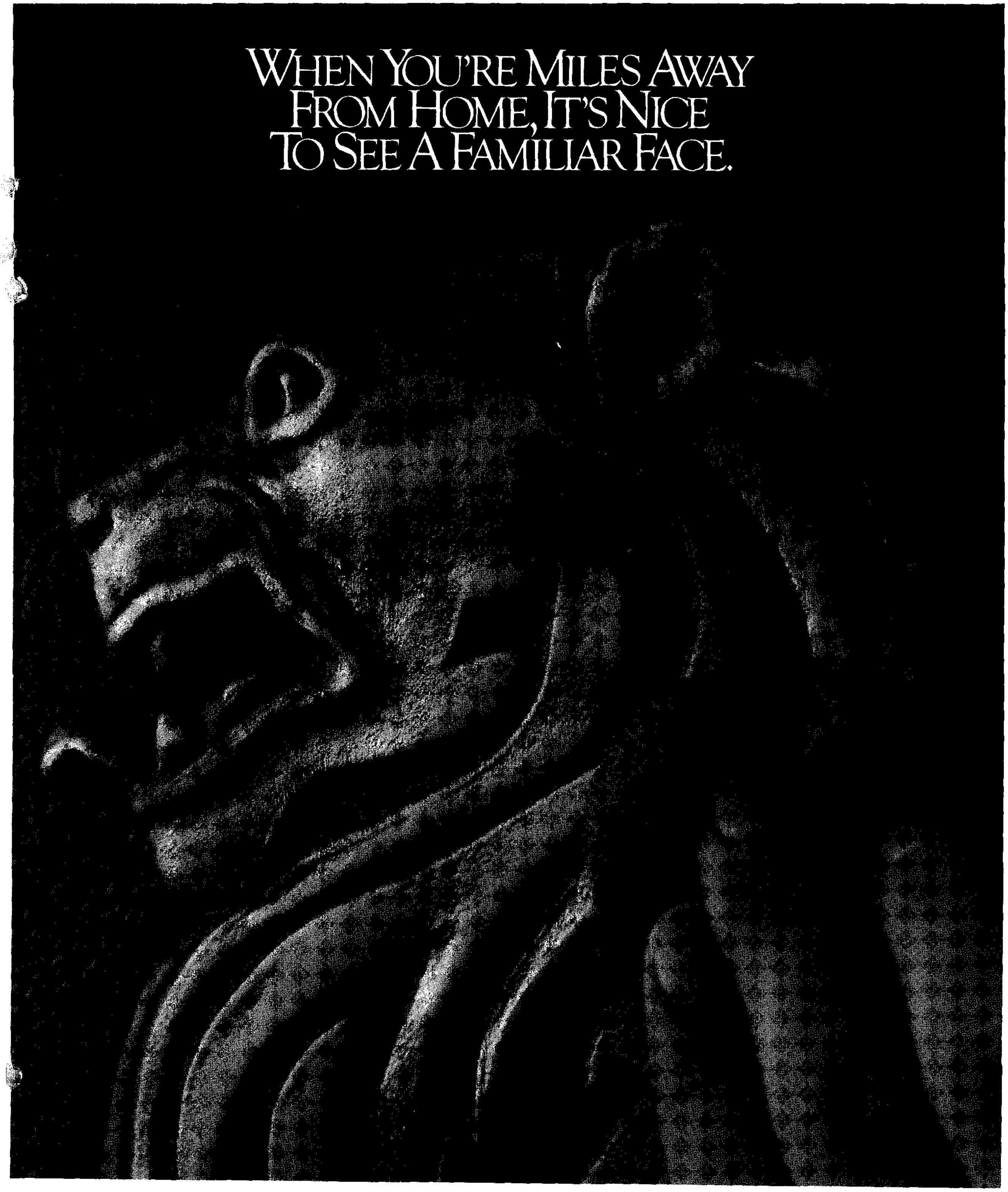

Perhaps a warm smile would be the perfect antidote to a long day. Or maybe an inviting setting that beckons you to leave your worries at the door. Where laughter and good conversation flow as easily as the wine. And your every wish—expressed and unexpressed—is met. Welcome to

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studied the symbols on the doors; those became the source of the Father's hand gestures, which I very clearly remember Balanchine demonstrating and, on one occasion, performing onstage. Balanchine told me that when the Son crawls back home I was to be completely unforgiving until he proves that he has repented. But my display of emotion was to be restrained. Balanchine showed me how to move my upper body a little bit forward and to unfurl my hand in a certain way, like a flowering of forgiveness. That has changed some since Balanchine's death, with different people bringing other ideas to the ending."

Mr. O'Brien continued, "There is something of Balanchine the man in my portrayal of the Father. I think that was the way he treated his dancers sometimes. Except for Suzanne [Farrell]—he was personally involved there—nothing pleased him more than when a dancer left and later asked to be taken back. He could be very unforgiving and relentless, even then. But if you showed that you were willing he was kind of flattered and might relent. I put a lot of him into everything I did onstage."

**New York City Ballet**—Feb. 5 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Quiet City," "Kammermusik No. 2," and "Chaconne." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Prodigal Son," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Other Dances," "Waltz Trilogy" (première), and "La Valse." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2: "Allegro Brillante," "Ecstatic Orange," and "La Valse." . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 8: "Swan Lake," divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," and "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 1: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 7: "Square Dance" and "Ecstatic Orange." . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: "Mother Goose," "The Cage," "Duo Concertant," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Waltz Trilogy," "Ecstatic Orange," and "Stars and Stripes." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 24.)

**Feld Ballets/NY**—Feb. 5 and Feb. 9 at 8: "Meadowlark," "At Midnight," and "Intermezzo No. 1." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 8 and Feb. 10 at 2: "A Footstep of Air," "Savage Glance" (première), and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: "Consort," "Embraced Waltzes," and "Common Ground." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: "Meadowlark," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "The Jig Is Up." (A talk by Eliot Feld follows this performance.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 7:30: "Contra Pose," "Fauna" (première), "Kore," and "Savage Glance." . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: "Contra Pose," "At Midnight," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Ah Scarlatti," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "Common Ground." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 10.)

**Doug Elkins Dance Company**—Presenting "A Cerca de la Escuelita," "More Wine for Polyphemus," "Rushing Deconstructivism/Drastic Romanticism," and "Accumulation/Mo(or)town." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 7-9 at 8 and Feb. 10 at 3.)

**Alice Farley**—*With a seven-member company,* presenting "Black Water" (Dancing Below the Sea)." (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 7-10 at 7:30.)

**"American Movement"**—Opening performances of a one-week joint engagement by three contemporary-dance companies. Feb. 12 at 8: Bebe Miller and Company in Act I of "The Hidden Boy: Incidents from a Stressed Memory"; the Elisa Monte Dance Company in "Treading" and "Dextra Dei"; and the Parsons Dance Company in "Scrutiny," as well as the première of "Tower," a solo work by David Parsons. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: Bebe Miller and Company performing "The Hidden Boy" in its entirety. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Feb. 17.)

# NIGHT LIFE

Bob Marley Day probably wouldn't get past the Arizona Legislature, but here in New York its advocates are many. On February 6—the late reggae divinity's birthdate—Sounds of Brazil will host its annual celebration. On February 8, Kilimanjaro will offer a tribute, including performances by Inner Circle and Freddie McGregor.

S.O.B.'s fêtes are always good-spirited—they've become a conference of Rastas and N.Y.U. students. This year's headliner will be Marley's sixteen-year-old, London-born son, Julian, whose own music is a hybrid of reggae and rap and who was recently in the studio recording a hip-hop rendition of his father's "Simmer Down." One might want to arrive early, because at eight-thirty Roger Steffens, who presides over the largest Marley archive in the world, will be giving a video presentation. We spoke to Steffens recently, and he told us about, among other things, his own introduction to Bob Marley ("I heard 'Catch a Fire' and I didn't take it off the turntable for three weeks. I just kept flipping it over and over"); the various places he has given lectures (the Schomburg Center, in Harlem; the American Film Institute, in Hollywood; the old Ritz); and his abiding fascination with Marley's stage presence ("It's extraordinary how much power this man had just standing still with his eyes closed"). Steffens' presentation will include unreleased video footage of Bob Marley and the Wailers in concert—as the archivist puts it, "To this day, the best performances of Marley's life are still in the vault."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

**Algonquin Hotel,** 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **JEFF HARNAR** starts up in the Oak Room on Feb. 5. Harnar, who'll be introducing two new shows, has been known to sing one number with a quiet, gentle lilt, then drop his voice down low and belt out the next one with a vibrato that could shake a diploma off a wall. His performances usually include just the right amount of bad jokes and over-the-top theatrics, as well as some musical surprises. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen, Harnar will dedicate his show to the "1959 Broadway Songbook." (He was born that year.) Fridays and Saturdays at eleven-fifteen, he'll sing Cole Porter. Dining.

**Ballroom,** 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. A festival of Brazilian female singers is currently in action. Feb. 5-10 is in the hands of **ELBA RAMALHO,** a Vegas-ready performer who sings, dances, and emotes with equal intensity, and whose band backs her up with some full-throttle samba; her last two nights here will feature additional samba musicians. **ELZA SOARES,** who packed the house toward the beginning of the festival, returns for five nights beginning Feb. 12.

**Birdland,** 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz mecca are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. **MIKE LONGO'S** trio holds sway through Feb. 7; the **CLAUDIO RODITI** quintet, with trombonist **JAY ASHBY,** takes charge Feb. 8-9; and **GABRIELA ANDERS** and her trio claim Feb. 10. Music from nine. Dining.

*George Shearing at Michael's Pub*

**Blue Note,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? Timbales whiz **TITO PUENTE** can be heard here Feb. 5-10, along with **MONGO SANTAMARIA.** Puente, a compact, white-haired man whose animated gestures recall Ralph Kramden, has been leading salsa bands since the late forties, has played on some one hundred albums, and has written several standards of the genre—including the Carlos Santana hit "Oye Como Va." Conga player and bandleader **RAY BARRETTO,** who was a member of Puente's band in the fifties, begins an engagement with his own group on Feb. 12, on a double bill with **DAVE VALENTIN'S** quintet. Music from nine. Dining.

**Bradley's,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done before the show starts, because once the first chord is struck the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. Bassist **BUSTER WILLIAMS,** pianist **MULGREW MILLER,** and drummer **AL FOSTER** work out through Feb. 9; pianist **KENNY BARRON,** drummer **BEN RILEY,** and bassist **DAVID WILLIAMS** claim Feb. 10; and the week beginning Feb. 11 belongs to guitarist **MARK WHITFIELD,** bassist **TARUS MATEEN,** and drummer **GREG HUTCHINSON.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

**Café Sin-é,** 122 St. Marks Place. (892-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se—and the owners eschew such things as advance bookings—but bohemian musicians often gather around a piano and work up wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

**Carlyle Hotel,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET** is currently in the Café Carlyle. The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and has some four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days, so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **FRANK OWENS** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

**Cat Club,** 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. **CLIFF SMALL,** who leads an orchestra here on Feb. 10, is a pianist and composer who has been swinging for many years—in the company of Earl Hines, Billy Eckstine, and Ella Fitzgerald, among others. Music from eight to midnight.

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Music from eight Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Fat Tuesday's,** 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through an iffy-looking side door, down a famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. The jazz-rock outfit **ELEMENTS,** featuring bassist **MARK EGAN** and drummer **DANNY GOTTLIEB,** comes in Feb. 5-10; pianist **MICHEL CAMILLO** begins a stint on Feb. 12. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

**F[illegible]nnery's,** 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—Formerly a dive bar called McCarthy's, this two-floor establishment looks as if it has been dynamited and rebuilt from the ashes up. On the ground floor is a well-scrubbed, amiable pub with all the classic features—pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports—and a few near-classic ones, like a CD jukebox. Downstairs is a low-ceilinged space that looks like a rec room and that, on Tuesdays and weekends, is home to an enlightened mixture of garage-rock, rockabilly, surf-punk, and psychedelic-rock bands. Black Cat Bones will perform on Feb. 5. Music begins at about nine on Tuesdays and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Kilimanjaro,** 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. **INNER CIRCLE** and **FREDDIE MC GREGOR** offer a Bob Marley tribute on Feb. 8.

**Knitting Factory,** 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. The schedule, in part: Feb. 7, **STEVE BERESFORD, CHRISTIAN MARCLAY, JOHN ZORN,** and **IKUE MORI;** Feb. 8, Steve Beresford; Feb. 9, the **AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS** quartet; Feb. 10, **MICHAEL FURMANEK** and Wide Open Spaces; and Feb. 11, **MARC RIBOT'S ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANS.** Music after nine.

**Manny's Car Wash,** 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. In the fifties, **LUTHER (GUITAR JUNIOR) JOHNSON,** like many bluesmen before and since, emigrated from the Deep South to Chicago, where he became a potentate on the West Side music scene. He rose to wider fame in the seventies, when he joined up with Muddy Waters (a relationship that lasted over seven years), and began leading his own groups in the eighties. He'll be here with his band on Feb. 7.

**Marquee,** 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. The **TOASTERS**—a New York-based ska band that works in rap, calypso, and R. & B.—perform on Feb. 8.

**Maxwell's,** 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the aroma coming from the nearby Maxwell House factory might give them a boost. Among the many bands passing through this week are Boss Hog (Feb. 7), Urge Overkill (Feb. 8), and **TINY LIGHTS** (Feb. 9).

**Michael's Pub,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Where you can always smell the stogies. The **GEORGE SHEARING** quartet, which, apart from the brilliant, British-born pianist, includes bassist **NEIL SWAINSON,** drummer **GRADY TATE,** and vibist **DON THOMPSON,** will begin a three-week engagement on Feb. 5. They will be performing material from the repertoire of Shearing's original quintet. Closed Sundays.

**Rainbow & Stars,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** begins a monthlong engagement on Feb. 5. She has, in effect, had two lives in show biz: the first peaked in the early fifties, with a string of hit recordings and a starring role in "White Christmas"; the second began in the late seventies, when she signed with the Concord label. She has made fourteen records with Concord so far, half of which are tribute albums, devoted to the likes of Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, and, most recently, Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein. Onstage, Ms. Clooney's approach is natural and understated: she has a warm, husky but clear voice, a world-weary cheerfulness, and a disarming sense of humor that bubbles up everywhere. Shows from nine. Closed Sundays and Mondays. Dining.

**Ritz,** 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—There's usually a good reason to go the Ritz, but there's almost always a better reason to stay away. Even leaving aside its midtown address—the sort of neighborhood you wake up in after you've been kidnapped—there's still the club's distressing pack-them-in, get-them-the-hell-out management tactics, and the fact that the atmosphere here, on any given night, is something between those of a high-school gym class and a police state. **KILLING JOKE,** the gloomy British dance-rock outfit, will appear on Feb. 9, with Front Line Assembly. The show begins at ten.

**Russian Tea Room,** 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to "score." Last fall, after a long, long slumber, the Tea Room's small, red-gold-and-green cabaret reopened with a series of performances. This winter's series includes an appearance by **ELLEN KAYE** on Feb. 10 at eight and ten-thirty. Before launching into a nervous rendition of "All of Me" at a recent season preview, Kaye got bonus points for bluntness when, after talking about her cabaret background, she told the crowd, "My mother owns this place." Dining and, of course, drinking.

**Sounds of Brazil,** 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. A Bob Marley Day Celebration, which includes an appearance by Julian Marley, is set for Feb. 6; music from Brazil and Trinidad can be heard Feb. 8-9; and reggae, including that of **CULTURE** and **SUGAR MINOTT,** will be on tap Feb. 13-14. Music from eight Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

**Sweet Basil,** 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—If you arrive late for a show at this celebrated shrine of jazz, you run the risk of being seated in the glass-enclosed terrace, which means you'll need a periscope to see the show and a parka to live through it. Otherwise, Sweet Basil is just the right environment for patrons—chiefly because it has a silence-or-else policy during shows. A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, RON CARTER,** and **BILLY HIGGINS** is here Tuesdays through Sundays. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

**Village Vanguard,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—It is said that the New Orleans-bred singer-pianist **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** is cut from the same cloth as Sinatra, and from this one can only assume that there wasn't quite enough cloth left. Though still in his early twenties, Connick is as slick as jazz "purists" come. It's strange to find him leading a quartet at the Vanguard, but that's just what he's doing this week. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

**Wetlands,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **ZEN TRICKSTERS** perform on Feb. 12, and the **SPIN DOCTORS** appear on Feb. 13.

### IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Ice Capades**—With Barbie and the Simpsons. (Nassau Coliseum. Feb. 5-10. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-516 794-9300.)

**Walt Disney's World on Ice**—Mickey's press agent reports that the mouse is honored to be celebrating his diamond jubilee at Radio City Music Hall. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Feb. 10. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

**Idris Ackamoor**—Presenting "An American Griot (A Jazz Autobiography)." (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 7-9 at 10.)

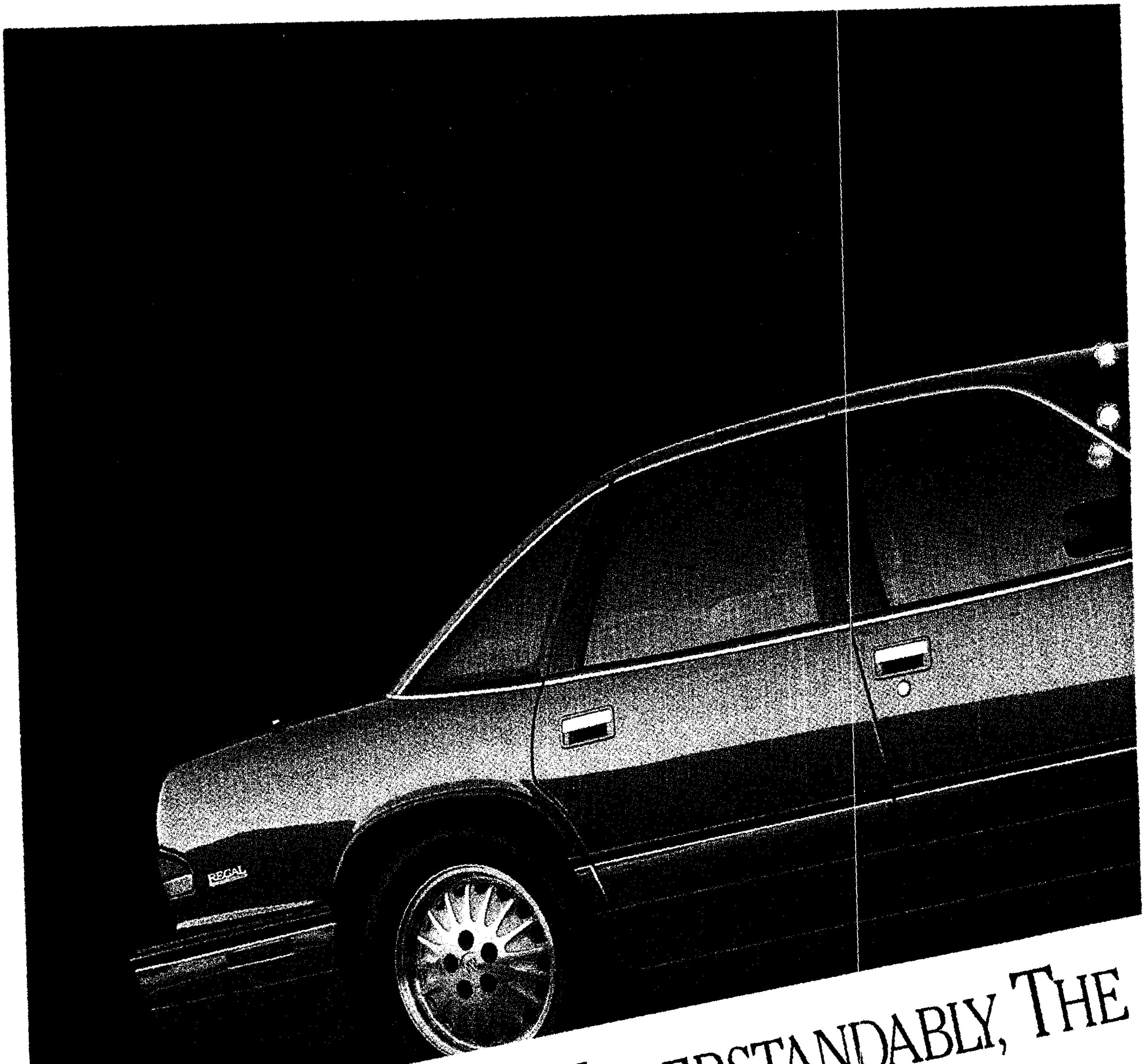
**Hazelle Goodman**—A performer who creates characters of various ethnicities. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Feb. 6 at 8. . . . ¶ Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 690-4100. Feb. 9 at 8 and Feb. 10 at 3.)

**P.S. 122**—Feb. 7-10 at 9:30: Mr. Fashion (né Gerard Little) presents "The Sammy Davis, Jr., Fashion Story," along with a video starring himself and directed by Jacob Burckhardt. . . . ¶ Feb. 8-10 at 8: "Milly's Orchid Show," a variety show featuring Milly May Smithy, a fictional country-and-Western singer; Aquanetta, an actual break-dancing drag queen; and Lynda Barry. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

## ART

IT is, we confess, with some perversity that we focus on Donald Sultan this week, as the artist's show of recent sculptures enters its closing stretch at Knoedler (19 East 70th Street; through February 9). Sultan's work has never been on our front burner. It has, however, been in steady demand for about a decade—so much so that the artist at a quite young age departed from the ranks of the struggling, the emerging, the evolving, and the just plain hanging on for dear life to join the bankable class of unperturbable artworkers. You don't hear much from inside this sanctum. But in the face of war, and in the shadow of a heavy commercial pall, Sultan's new work—as predictably resolved here in the round as it is in its usual two dimensions—impressed us with its stiff upper lip. It can countenance anything, it seems, without a ripple.

Sultan's best-known image is the lemon. For years now a pleasingly generic lemon shape has signalled Sultan's hand in countless large, handsome, tar-brushed paintings, as well as in an army of his exquisitely produced prints—prints with blacks as dense as coal. In this exhibition we find just one lemon, cast in lead and portentously titled "Lead Lemon Mar. 25 1985." The citrus sits on a high pedestal, in a Plexiglas case, reminding us a bit wistfully of Jasper Johns' bronzed beer cans or, sadder still, of the late Joseph Beuys' funny fresh-lemon-with-light-bulb multiples of just a few seasons past. Sultan's "Lead Lemon" is a dead, dull thing,



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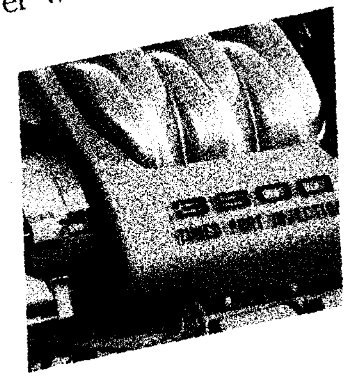

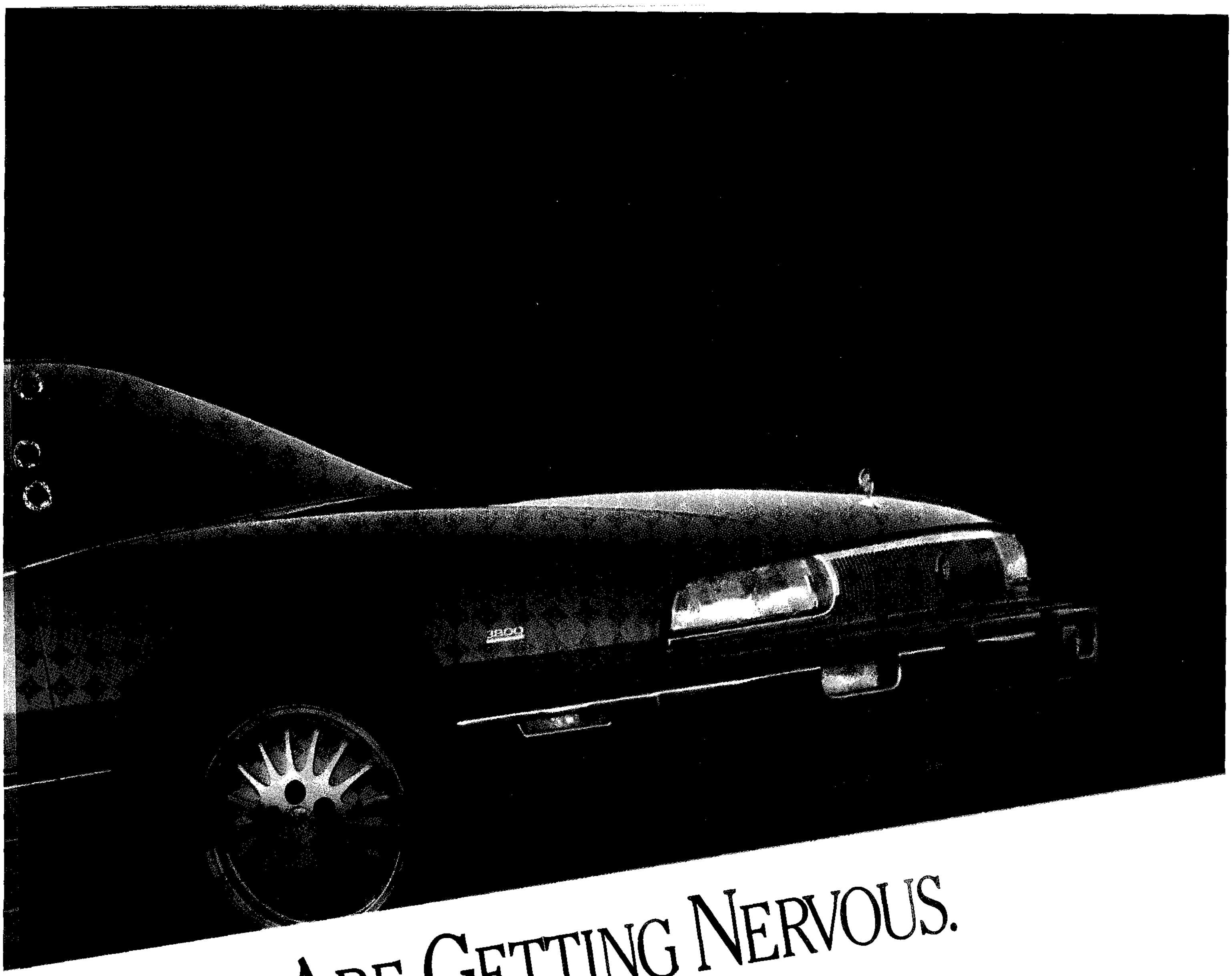

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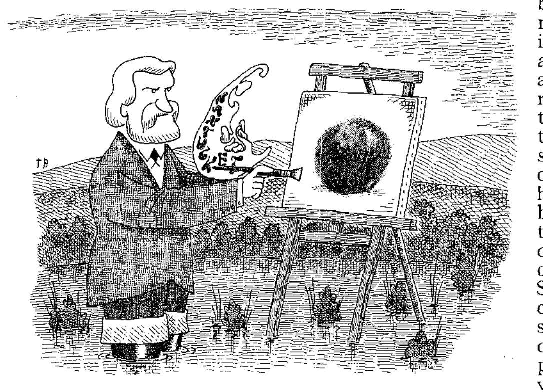
satisfying mainly in its apparent weight. It suggests something you might want to fool with on a desk. Several other, larger sculptures in the show suggest ideas for house and garden. The most massive of Sultan's several metal-link pieces, for instance, oomphy and utterly literal, hang from a great-looking, nasty hook in the ceiling, evoking memories of Mark di Suvero's brawny enterprise, as well as of the whole dumb-smart look of New Image paintings by artists such as Neil Jenney and, indeed, a younger Sultan. Also on view are three "Rain Pots" (lead garden urns filled with water), along with four lead pots containing murky, borscht-with-cream paint. Here again the appeal is basic. The paint has coagulated, forming a thick skin. Viewers may find pleasure in contemplating this viscous layer, perhaps imagining the free-flowing repercussions of a puncture.

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—An engaging show of American portrait miniatures—mainly little locket likenesses, in watercolors on vellum or ivory—from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which we can see styles evolve from neoclassicism to Romanticism, as well as trace the rise and decline of the medium all the way from naïve Colonial portraiture to the aftermath of photography. Many members of the celebrated Peale family are represented, both as artists and as subjects, but Joseph Wood's self-portrait (circa 1810) wins the portable-matinée-idol award. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ "Kasimir Malevich, 1878-1935" offers a hundred and seventy paintings, drawings, and architectural models by the Russian founder of Suprematism. Starts Feb. 7. . . . ¶ The best works in the new Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court are, in fact, in an annex—more an architectural afterthought—off to the side of the court, in the entrance to the Henry R. Kravis wing. There you will find Rodin's "Burghers of Calais," which is awkwardly sited but would look great anywhere; Bourdelle's amazing bronze statue of the sculptor Carpeaux; and a number of Maillols. Perhaps the finest works in the Petrie Court proper are the earliest: two very funny sculptures of a fruit-bearing Priapus and Flora that originally graced the entrance of the Villa Borghese, by Pietro Bernini, who was assisted by his soon-to-be-better-known young son, Gian Lorenzo. . . . ¶ Nine paintings and eleven works on paper by the German Romantic Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). All of the works are from the Pushkin and the Hermitage, in the Soviet Union. Through March 31. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, including work by William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Seventeen Dutch-style cupboards crafted in New York and New Jersey between 1650 and 1800. Through April 7. . . . ¶ "Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art." Through March 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St.—In the third of the museum's "Artist's Choice" series, Chuck Close, perhaps today's most enigmatic portraitist, has covered practically every available inch of the small gallery where "Christina's World" previously reigned with framed portraits from the museum's collection. While the very idea of the portrait seems antithetical to the Modern's mission, Close has come up with an endless series of amazing juxtapositions. Ignoring the museum's traditional curatorial divisions, which rank the importance of art according to medium, the artist has combined paintings, prints, sculptures, drawings, and photographs without any apparent judgment, with the possible exception of generally avoiding bona-fide masterpieces. Balthus's portrait of Miró and his daughter offers a special glimpse into both artists' psyches, while Wegman's double portrait of his Weimaraner Fay Ray and the painter Ed Ruscha is indebted to puns for its logic. There are twentieth-century icons, such as Brassaï's fiercely enigmatic portrait of Genet, and self-portraits by Heckel, Maurer, and Beckmann, which offer views of more than you probably want to see. On one wall is Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' photograph of Cindy Sherman, today's chameleon self-portraitist; on another is Edward Weston's photo of Nahui Olin, a bizarre image that undoubtedly influenced Sherman. If you crouch down very low, you'll find a lithograph by Picasso of his children Paloma and Claude, done with the consummate personal mark—fingerprints, a technique picked up several decades later by the curator himself. Through March 19. . . . ¶ In the museum's "Projects" space, the artist Dennis Adams critiques the museum itself with a particularly timely installation entitled "Road to Victory." This was also the title of an exhibition mounted by Edward Steichen in 1942, when he was a lieutenant commander in the Navy. (He later became the director of the museum's department of photography.) The entrance to the space is blocked by a row of identical empty vitrines with details of war photos from the original exhibition reflected on their low shelves. The walls of the vitrines are made of the same dark-blue glass that graces the much criticized apartment tower above the museum. Beyond the vitrines, on angled walls, are photomurals of the original exhibition, and reflected on the lacquered wall behind them are two fuzzy mirror images of what looks a little like the isle of Manhattan. On closer inspection these turn out to be photos of camouflaged troops in the desert. This is an exceedingly intelligent work that poses a slew of questions about propaganda, colonization, and museums and their ostensible neutrality, but it is also visually unchallenging and depends far too much on the overused Beuysian vitrine. Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ Fourteen panoramic photographs of Antarctica, taken in 1989, by Stuart Klipper. Through March 19. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)



*Eastman Johnson at the National Academy*

**Guggenheim Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn.

**Whitney Museum of American Art,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A small show of twenty-nine more or less surrealistic works on paper made between the late nineteen-thirties and the recent past. There is a fast segue of drawings by figures, minor and major, of the New York School—from Gerome Kamrowski to Robert Motherwell, from Pavel Tchelitchew to Jackson Pollock—who were strongly influenced by European émigré artists of the Second World War era. The aim of these artists was to liberate Surrealism from any hint of narrative or illustration. Biomorphic abstraction was the outcome then. And though we are offered works by mavericks such as Lee Bontecou (whose tondo drawing is a cross between Oskar Schlemmer and "The Road Warrior") and the altogether maniacal Jess, biomorphic abstraction—vintage 1989, by Carroll Dunham—is also the last note of this show. Through April 7. . . . ¶ Sixty paintings, sculptures, and prints from the nineteen-eighties, including work by Jasper Johns, Barbara Kruger, Susan Rothenberg, and David Salle. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." Half of the nearly eighty silk-screen paintings the artist made during the early sixties are on view, and their energy is intense. These paintings are striking because not only do they chronicle the spirit of their time with amalgamations of machine-produced media images—Rauschenberg's Kennedy is as much an icon as Warhol's Marilyn—but they are also chockablock full of glorious brushwork. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Brooklyn Museum,** Eastern Parkway—Among the seventy-four paintings in "Albert Bierstadt: Art & Enterprise" are several of the artist's monumental Western landscapes, as well as a selection of his smaller plein-air oil sketches. Starts Feb. 8. . . . ¶ A lobby installation by Reeva Potoff that includes, among other elements, pages of the 1911 Encyclopaedia Brittanica arranged in a cone that reaches to the ceiling. Through March 31. . . . ¶ More than fifty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm and bamboo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**American Museum of Natural History,** Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Manifest Destiny," a small show of rare nineteenth-century books and illustrations relating to government expeditions into "frontier" areas in the United States. Through April 30. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

**Asia Society,** Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Romance of the Taj Mahal." Shah Jahan (1592-1666), a descendant of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan, ruler of the most powerful Indian empire, was a great patron of the arts. Of all the great Mogul monuments he erected, by far the best known is the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal is the ultimate expression of power through death, but, as the curator Pratapaditya Pal so deftly indicates in this exhibition's catalogue, it has also become synonymous with India in advertising and promotion, and has come to represent everything from riches to romance, blues singers to calendars. The first half of this exhibition includes a tight and often dazzling display of objects from Shah Jahan's court: an extensive and glorious collection of paintings to suit virtually every interest, from elegant depictions of court life to exquisite color studies of flowers; a rug intricately woven with two thousand knots per square inch; and magnificent rubies and emeralds. In the second half, which examines the hold the Taj Mahal has had on later generations of travellers and painters, this otherwise concise show becomes silly, with a succession of paintings ranging from mediocre to dreadful. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**Jewish Museum,** at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A hundred sculptures and thirty-one drawings by Jacques Lipchitz. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

**National Academy of Design,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Eastman Johnson's "The Cranberry Harvest, Island of Nantucket" was first shown at the National Academy's 1880 annual exhibition, and it is now the centerpiece of a show that includes thirteen of the artist's other cranberry-harvest studies and paintings. Through March 24. . . . ¶ Drawings and watercolors by the British Romantic Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

**New-York Historical Society,** 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Art What Thou Eat," a show of paintings and sculptures, all having to do with those three square meals a day. Works range from Samuel Marsden Brookes' "Steelhead Salmon" (1885) to David Wojnarowicz's "Tuna" (1983). Through March 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

**Brice Marden**—The sight of Marden's classic seventies "Grove Group," assembled for the first time, is a slow, considerable pleasure and is also of historical note. The five abstract greenish paintings, inspired by sojourns in Greece, seem fired by landscape, tempered by architecture, and glazed by a sort of neo-Ruskinian moral anxiety, as well as, more literally, by the artist's characteristically lapidary encaustic technique. Through March 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

**Short List**—**thomas hart benton,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through March 2); **gregory gillespie,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through March 2); **stephen pace,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Feb. 23), and Perlow, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. (through Feb. 27).

## GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

**Alice Provensen**—A show of original watercolors for a recently published children's book titled "The Buck Stops Here: The Presidents of the United States." The visual style is bright, busy, and folkloric—quilts and samplers seem to have been inspirations—and the nuggets of information conveyed about our leaders are clear, essentially non-partisan, and respectful without being reverential. Well-known earlier collaborative works by Mrs. Provensen and her late husband, Martin, are also on view. Through March 9. (Feiwel, 24 W. 57th St.)

**"Who Framed Modern Art or the Quantitative Life of Roger Rabbit"**—Drawing on the Janis gallery's impressive inventory of modern masterpieces and its connections with the Museum of Modern Art, this exhibition presents atypical juxtapositions that range from the opportunistic to the ridiculous to the fascinating. In most of the combinations there is a pretense of statement, but little is actually said. If you go simply to admire some pretty good interior decoration, you can't help but be impressed by Brancusi's "Prometheus," Yves Klein's "Blue Sponge," and Ellsworth Kelly's "Two Blacks, White, and Blue," not to mention an O'Keeffe sexual abstraction, two Johns number drawings, and a late Pollock canvas. Little sense can be made of arrangements that group such artists as Arman, Dubuffet, and Hesse, but the flow from Koons' flowered mirror (a kind of cutesified version of van Gogh's "Sunflowers") to Andy Warhol's dollar signs and on to Ross Bleckner's "The Examination" is sweeping and illuminating. Through Feb. 9. (110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

**"The Times, the Chronicle, & the Observer"**—Although the sixties are traditionally thought of as the time of the maturation of Pop and the rise of minimalism, curator Douglas Blau has selected paintings that emphasize a narrative complexity not usually associated with the period. He has brought together artists who are rarely linked, and much is gained in the mixture. Many of the works are associated with death, either literally, as in Warhol's electric-chair and car-crash silk screens, or metaphorically, as in Morley's painting of a postcard showing an anachronistic cruise liner. But the interest in death also seems to demonstrate a burgeoning attitude toward picture-making that came to influence many later artists. In these works there is much emphasis on mechanical processes—the film strip for Warhol; the postcard for Morley; the snapshot for Artschwager, Richter, and Celmins; the Polaroid for Baldessari. There is also an exploration of the shifting relationship of the viewer to the work of art, as seen in Celmins' view out a car window onto a bland freeway or in Baldessari's placement of the viewer both inside and outside the frame. And most of the paintings were executed in various shades of newspaper or black-and-white-TV gray. But despite all the concern the artists had with process a lot of glorious works are included here, such as Richter's "The Hunting Party," a kind of Futurist update that is about as gorgeous as painting gets. Through Feb. 9. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

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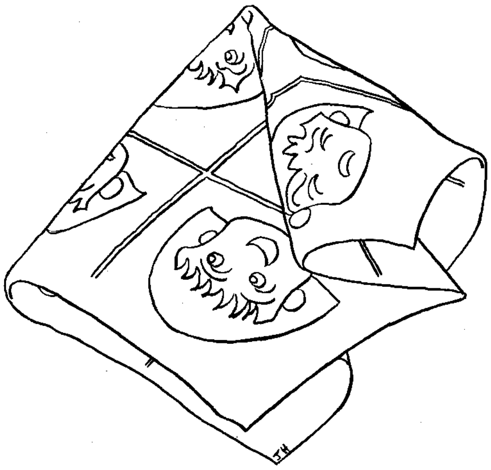


*Self-portrait by Jan Hashey*

**Group Show**—A sculpture show that includes Judd's fine early "Untitled Spice Rack" and Oldenburg's "Ice-Cream Sandwich." The oddest inclusion, as well as one of the strongest, is not a sculpture at all; it is a large Nauman drawing of the words "Dream Reaper"—a vintage Nauman inversion—in highly sculptural letters. Its inclusion seems to be ghoulishly well timed. Through Feb. 23. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

**Short List**—**james bohary,** Prats, 24 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 19); **richard chiriani,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 20); **janet fish,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **grace hartigan,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 9); **fernand léger** and **jenny lee,** Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 19); **malcolm morley,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **rodney ripps,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **dorothea rockburne,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **kimber smith,** Drake (through March 9) and Ross (starts Feb. 6), 50 W. 57th St.; **frederic matys thursz,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 9); **niele toroni,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 23).

## GALLERIES—SoHo

**Siah Armajani**—Large metallic sculptural tableaux with references to industry, farming, and the public podium. These beautiful works are a slow sell and, with their evocation of the work ethic, must be the most earnest in town, with a Shaker simplicity and a Juddian precision. Through Feb. 16. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

**Carl Bronson**—The larger paintings in this show are done on grainy wood and have the sort of luscious names—"Sugared Twilight" and "Satin Sunburst"—that you might find on decorator paint chips. Although a bit thin, they do have a certain sensuousness, like rainbow sherbet. The smaller works, painted on aluminum machine parts, hold no interest whatsoever. Through Feb. 16. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

**Robert Colescott / Richard Hull**—Colescott is the Thomas Hart Benton of the contemporary era. His sassy vignettes are loaded with political issues, related to both art and society, and they seem to spill over with aggression and play. What distinguishes these new paintings is their sheer compositional complexity; they demonstrate the artist's uncanny ability to orchestrate a multitude of forms and colors. The narratives are so complex that unravelling them could take days. / Five large and highly charged drawings in which the artist has broken out of his segmented format, crossing Hundertwasser and Ensor and processing everything through the eyes of the naïve. One of the works depicts wrought-iron grating as if it were stained-glass tracery, and goblins flying through the air. Through Feb. 13. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

**John Currin / Robin Kahn**—Charmingly retro-style portrait paintings of girls. The portraits—of solemn black girls with big 'fros and of white Midwestern blondes who look destined for nursing school—might very well have been inspired by high-school-yearbook photographs from another era. / Red satin capes or sheets embroidered with IUDs. Through Feb. 16. . . . ¶ This gallery is also offering a great public service by making a library of nearly two hundred videotapes available for viewing. It is a broad and personal selection, ranging from the historically influential work of Acconci, Wegman, Ant Farm, Birnbaum, and Rosler to the current activist work of DIVA TV, Paper Tiger TV, and Gran Fury, as well as a number of examples of new filmmaking. Through March 23. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

**Keith Haring** (1958-90) and **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960-88)—There are those who contend that Haring was not much of a painter; one of the aims of this show is to prove otherwise. The impressive grouping includes some of the artist's most exuberant paintings on tarp—the ones that display a sense of mission as well as a fine command of the drippy brush—along with several painted objects, such as a standing Nefertiti-like sarcophagus. In the few works where Haring has attempted to be more purely pictorial as opposed to pictographic, his charismatic hold seems to evaporate and his limitations as a painter become clear. Basquiat, on the other hand, never had to prove himself a painter. He seemed to spring forth fully formed, with a masterly, scratchy hand that made him the most commanding scribbler since Twombly, and an unerring compositional sense that allowed him to put the list, the "X," and the smudge in exactly the right place. The exhibition ends on a bittersweet note with a late painting by Haring in his earlier style. It depicts a pile of crowns, the kind Basquiat drew in his Samo days. It is a reverential portrait of Basquiat, although it is unclear whether the pile is an accumulation of trophies or of refuse. Through Feb. 9. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

**Alfred Jensen** (1903-81)—Virtually nothing is known of the pre-fifties art of the elfin Jensen, who was known in the thirties and forties as the companion of art patron and Baltimore Museum benefactor Saidie May, and in the fifties as the better-adjusted sidekick of Mark Rothko. In the late fifties, Jensen's work seemed to arrive completely formed, in a style that had nothing to do with the prevailing Abstract Expressionism. Younger generations have returned to his work from this period, and it has become the antecedent to so many different kinds of art, from the opulent mosaics of the pattern painters to the obsessive diagramming of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Jensen's vision—an amalgam of Guatemalan textile, designs, scientific diagrams, arcane numerical systems, color theories, and much more—is truly eccentric, with something of an autistic genius to it. This show of seven works is a fine selection of his luscious, beautiful, and haunted canvases. Through Feb. 23. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

**Mary Lucier**—A key figure in recent American video art, Lucier is playing down the video component in this sculptural installation about landscape, industry, and decay. The results are disappointing. The best part *is* the video, which is essentially a sequence of images of rusted machinery and relics of mass transportation and communication that speak of the days when the railroads were the nation's bloodline. The video is shown on a large monitor atop a forklift, the only grouping in the show that has weight and poetry. Whereas the other sculptural arrangements are too Kienholzian, this one has a romantic spirit all its own. Through Feb. 23. (Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway.)

**Jeff Perrone**—In quite a switch from his last exhibition, this artist/critic is now making small, exquisitely created ceramic plaques featuring details from Indian and Persian miniatures, closeups of various kinds of Islamic and harlequin patterns, and occasional Matissean compositions and unattributed quotations, such as "Eroticism triumphs over uniformity." In some of the plaques, particularly those with the simplest patterns, the glaze colors have been applied with the touch of a fine painter. But too much effort has been given to trying to make the curled-edge, shardlike plaques look like art; their grouping into geometric shapes, for instance, seems arbitrary and distracts from the artist's refined hand. Through Feb. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

**Frank Stella**—For a while now, the big formal question with Stella has been whether his recent work can properly be called sculpture. This compelling show of eight prodigiously hunky new works pushes this question very far without quite answering it. Perhaps inspired in part by Anselm Kiefer's ingenious leaps into the third dimension, Stella has latched onto a couple of powerfully dramatic, dynamic, and indeed oceanic themes from art history—Copley's "Watson and the Shark" and Géricault's recently very seminal "Raft of the Medusa"—and has used them to forge some incredibly physical, forceful works. Stella has dared to make disaster at sea—a grizzly shipwreck and a gruesome ordeal—the academic subject as well as the poetic metaphor of his new work. These muscular forms explode in illogical clusters, like so many furiously chaotic cabbages and carbuncles, from heavy, wall-like steel supports. It is difficult to tell which allusion is which or, in fact, which piece is which, because everywhere one looks the drama involves a struggle with the supporting structures. Through Feb. 9. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

**Lawrence Weiner**—A beautiful, still, quite romantic show of the Conceptualist's version of medieval landscape painting. Each work consists of an evocative phrase—"Gathered Heather," "Trodden Grass," "Splintered Wood"—painted above a dividing line, and, below it, brackets with nothing but space between them. This space is silence, a blank for the viewer to fill in—in a sense the equal of the phrase above. Through Feb. 9. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

**"Synthesis"**—There is a rich range of works in this show—a kind of report on the state of contemporary nonobjective painting—and most of the pieces are earnest, spirited, and skillfully done. But it nonetheless has an overstudied, somewhat academic feel. Among the notable exceptions is David Row's "Homage to the Queen of Hearts," a modest yet hearty space-bending painting (a tribute to de Kooning) that makes bright-apple green and glow-in-the-dark lipstick pink appealing. Through Feb. 9. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

**Group Shows**—At **THE DRAWING CENTER,** 35 Wooster St.: In this exhibition, which is only marginally better than the usual "Selections" shows at this gallery, most of the work suffers from a lack of distinctiveness. Although much of it has a definite political bent, it has no resonance. Bruno Jakob, for example, reaches for statement and comes up with nothing. His "Invisible Drawings," formed by applying plain water to paper to create no more than some listless wrinkles, have such saccharine and possibly ironic titles as "Seven Years of Sunshine." But the show does include the very sensitive watercolors of John Larabee. These consist of nippled forms, like pillows and balloons, that the artist seems to have captured from the vaporousness of air. Through Feb. 16. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.) . . . **STUX,** 155 Spring St.: Typical droll fare: work by artists who are hardly able to give form to their malaise. The sole exception is a set of clever sculpture ensembles by Vladimir Urban, in which life-size, grumpy dogs, made of piles of dried burdock, are shown either asleep beneath a spill of urban refuse or shoved into a supermarket cart, like a homeless mound of potpourri. Through Feb. 9.

**Short List**—**LESLIE BOHNENKAMP,** Gimpel, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 16); **HANNE DARBOVEN,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Feb. 9); **VICTOR ELMALEH,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **SAM GLANKOFF** and **PETER SCHROTH,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through Feb. 23); **JAN HASHEY,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Feb. 23); **KOMAR & MELAMID,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through Feb. 16); **AGNES MARTIN,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **DONALD MOFFETT,** Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway, and Watson, 241 Lafayette St. (through Feb. 16); **MANUEL NERI,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **MIMMO ROTELLA,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through March 2); **ADAM SIMON,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Feb. 9); **JOE STEFANELLI,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. (through Feb. 23); **MICHAEL VENEZIA,** RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (through Feb. 9).

### OTHER GALLERIES

**"Cool Cats"**—Sixty-five illustrations of our feline companions. Among the artists are Gary Baseman, Roz Chast, Victoria Roberts, and Douglas Fraser. Through Feb. 16. (The Illustration Gallery, 330 E. 11th St. Opens at 1 Tuesdays through Sundays.)

**Short List**—**NATALIE BOOKCHIN,** Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. (opens at noon, through Feb. 9); **DAVID HAMMONS,** P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City (opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays, through Feb. 10).

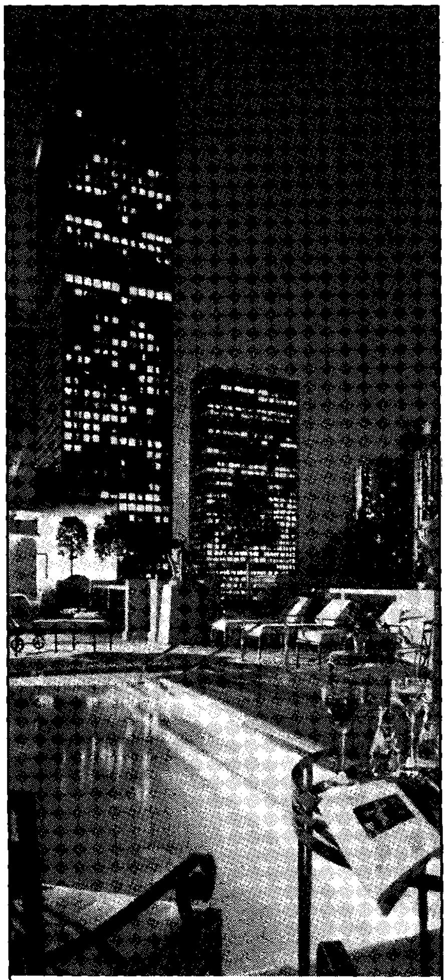
## PHOTOGRAPHY

WHEN we first saw some of Stuart Klipper's color panoramas of Antarctica it was a scorcher of a day, in the summer of 1987. We hadn't left the city for a while, and must not have realized how habituated we'd become to urban colors and blocked views, because we were surprised at how we reacted to Klipper's pictures. These photographs were such a swoon of space, such a visual drink of icy blues, to-die-for pinks, and mammoth floats of white and more white that they seduced us with the romance of travel—something we had assumed was lost in our age of tourism. Klipper's photographs reminded us of an era when photographers would go out on expeditions and bring back records of places that seemed so far away, so different that they might as well have been on another planet. But the fact that Klipper's photos were in color made it clear that they were contemporary, and certain images—such as penguins clumped together like men in black-tie—left no doubt that this was Earth we were looking at. What a planet! A number of the photographs have the kind of pre-psychedelic magic that certain paintings of nature have. Church's skies have it, as do Monet's water lilies; and echoes of both were there in Klipper's work, as was an implicit impassioned ecological statement.

The Museum of Modern Art has just opened a show of fourteen panoramas that Klipper took on a 1989 trip to Antarctica. We look forward to seeing how his work has developed.

**Judith Joy Ross**—Ross works with an old-fashioned 8 x 10 view camera, and develops her pictures on what the exhibition catalogue calls "printing-out paper," but what she comes up with is decidedly contemporary. Her subjects range from kids in a park to people visiting the Vietnam War Memorial, from congressional staff members to youths in Easton, Pennsylvania. Most recently, she has taken pictures of men and women in the Army Reserve who were about to be sent to Saudi Arabia. Hers is the kind of vision that used to be called "proletarian." It's also deeply soulful. Through Feb. 16. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway.)

**Short List**—**LEWIS BALTZ,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Feb. 9); **BRUCE CHARLESWORTH,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through March 16); **NEELON CRAWFORD,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturday, through Feb. 23); **WILLIE DOHERTY,** Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through March 2); **JUDY FISKIN,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through Feb. 9); **RUZZIE GREEN,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through Feb. 16); **MARTIN KIPPENBERGER,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **LISETTE MODEL,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 16); **ANDREA MODICA,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Feb. 23); **ANDREW MOORE,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 9); **JOYCE TENNESON,** Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St. (through Feb. 9).



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# MUSIC

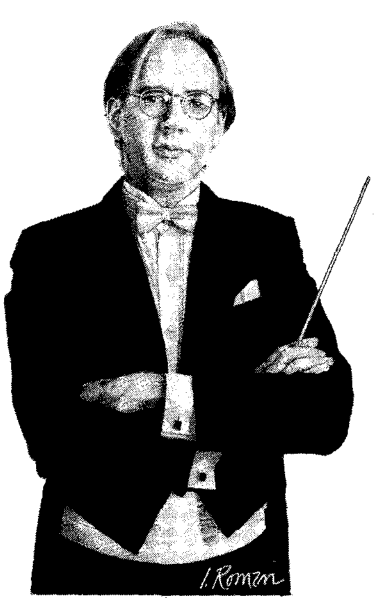
THERE is an oddity in the way Christoph Willibald von Gluck's reputation has come down to us. Gluck is most famous for composing "Orfeo ed Euridice" and for inaugurating a program of reform that proved decisively influential in the transition from opera's long Baroque chapter to the rise of the Romantic melodrama. But the form in which "Orfeo" has generally been heard in this century is a revised and edited one that is several degrees less "reformist" than the radical score Gluck composed in 1762 for Vienna, to a libretto by Raniero de' Calzabigi.

The original "Orfeo" was the opening salvo of Gluck's campaign; it was followed by two more Viennese collaborations with the same librettist. Gluck then went to Paris, where, besides composing new works of noble inspiration, he revised "Orfeo," adding a great deal of music. These additions are problematic when judged by Gluck's Viennese manifesto: they include an old-style bravura aria with cadenza, several pieces that interrupt the action, and some in which the music does not fit the dramatic situation happily. But they also contain some of the opera's most celebrated and beautiful music, and they are all (except, sometimes, for the bravura aria) included in the versions of "Orfeo" most houses play. It takes a severe and daring hand to strike these beloved pages, but only by trying "Orfeo" without them can the taut directness of the first version be assessed and its merits compared with those of the richer, more leisurely revision. Some adventurous companies have lately been doing this; one is the Komische Oper Berlin, whose production, staged by Harry Kupfer, comes to the Brooklyn Academy of Music on February 11. New York has heard the 1762 "Orfeo" before, in a Concert Royal "period" staging and in a plush Philadelphia Orchestra concert version, and there are recordings available (including one, on Capriccio, based on the Kupfer staging). We have only slowly come around to the view that the sparser "Orfeo" is a more moving opera, and though we would still feel deprived if everyone adopted it, we are very eager to see it again at BAM.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

## OPERA

**Metropolitan Opera**—**FIDELIO,** with Elizabeth Connell, Helen Donath, Gary Lakes, Hartmut Welker, and Kurt Moll; conducted by Christof Perick. (Feb. 4, Feb. 9, and Feb. 12, all at 8.) . . . **DIE FLEDERMAUS,** with Pamela Coburn, Barbara Kilduff, Helga Dernesch, Neil Rosenshein, Siegfried Jerusalem, Walter Berry, and Dom DeLuise; Julius Rudel. (Feb. 5 and Feb. 8 at 8.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Kathleen Battle, Luciana Serra, Francisco Araiza, and Kurt Moll; James Levine. (Feb. 6 at 8 and Feb. 9 at 1:30.) . . . **LUISA MILLER,** with Susan Dunn, Isola Jones, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Nello Santi. (Feb. 7 and Feb. 11 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Myra Merritt, Placido Domingo, and Brian Schexnayder; Christian Badea. (Feb. 13 at 8.)



*Andrew Parrott, of the Taverner Consort and Choir*

**Opera Orchestra of New York**—Presenting a concert version of Bellini's "La Sonnambula," with soprano June Anderson, tenor Raúl Giménez, and bass Paul Plishka; conducted by Eve Queler. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 10 at 8.)

**BAM Opera**—Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice," imported from the Komische Oper Berlin and sung in German (with English supertitles). Countertenor Jochen Kowalski appears as Orpheus (who, in this staging, is depicted as a pop singer); sopranos Dagmar Schellenberger-Ernst and Christiane Oertel appear as Euridice and Amor. Hartmut Haenchen conducts. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Feb. 11 at 7 and Feb. 13 at 8. Through Feb. 17.)

**Juilliard Opera Center**—Performing a fully staged production of Verdi's "Falstaff," conducted by Julius Rudel. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. For information about tickets, call 874-7515. Feb. 11 and Feb. 13 at 8. Through Feb. 16.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**New York Philharmonic**—Zubin Mehta conducts symphonies by Mozart and Brahms (his third), as well as Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto, featuring Igor Oistrakh. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 7 and Feb. 9 at 8, Feb. 8 at 11 A.M., and Feb. 12 at 7:30.)

**Philadelphia Orchestra**—Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts works of Beethoven and Dvořák (including his Cello Concerto, with Natalia Gutman). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

*Richard Rodgers*

**The Classical Band**—Bruno Weil conducts two overtures and two symphonies (the fifth and sixth) by Schubert. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**U.S.S.R. State Symphony**—Yevgeny Svetlanov conducts Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony and First Violin Concerto (with soloist Vadim Repin), and Scriabin's Third Symphony. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

**Czechoslovak Chamber Orchestra**—Jaroslav Krcek conduct music by Mozart and Bach (including the Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto), and soprano Benita Valente is soloist in Bach's wedding cantata "Weichet Nur." (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 8 at 8.)

**Orpheus**—The conductorless chamber orchestra plays music by Schubert (his Fifth Symphony), Webern, Halffter, and Mozart (his C-Minor Piano Concerto, with Radu Lupu as soloist). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**American Composers Orchestra**—Dennis Russell Davies conducts works by Peter Lieberson, Wayne Peterson, and Otto Luening (including his "Wisconsin Suite"), as well as Earl Kim's Violin Concerto, with soloist Itzhak Perlman. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 10 at 3.)

**Brandenburg Ensemble**—Pianists András Sch[illegible] and Peter Serkin perform three double concertos by J. S. Bach, with Alexander Schneider leading the orchestra. The concert also includes Bach's Third "Brandenburg" Concerto and a Vivaldi concerto grosso. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 10 at 3.)

**National Symphony Orchestra**—Mstislav Rostropovich conducts Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony (the "Little Russian") and two concertante works: Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder," with baritone Håkan Hagegård, and the New York première of Richard Wernick's Piano Concerto, with Lambert Orkis as soloist. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

**Philharmonia Virtuosi**—Music by Tchaikovsky, Honegger, and Sinding, with various soloists. Richard Kapp conducts. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 12 at 8.)

**Collegiate Chorale**—Robert Bass directs Rossini's "Petite Messe Solennelle," with soprano Leona Mitchell, mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar, tenor Vinson Cole, and bass Jeffrey Wells. Described by the composer as "the final sin of my old age," the Mass is none too "solennelle," and is "petite" mainly in its accompanying ensemble, which, comprising merely two pianos and a harmonium, was modest enough to squeeze into a Parisian town house for the piece's unveiling, in 1864. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

**Mozart Canons and Chamber Music**—Judith Clurman directs the Juilliard Chamber Singers in nine of Mozart's vocal canons (including several with notoriously bawdy lyrics), and Juilliard students play his Oboe Quartet and the C-Major and D-Major Sonatas for Piano, Four-Hands. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 8 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 874-7515.)

**Canterbury Choral Society**—Charles Dodsley Walker directs the choir, soloists, and organist Justin Bischof in Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb" and Kodály's "Missa Brevis." (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Feb. 10 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

## RECITALS

**Kevin McMillan**—Baritone, singing Schubert's "Die Schöne Müllerin," with pianist Warren Jones. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 5 at 8.)

**Bion Tsang**—The cellist, bronze medallist of the 1990 Tchaikovsky Competition, performs works by Schubert, Schumann, Britten, an[illegible] Leon Kirchner; with pianist Richard Bishop. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Feb. 5 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

**Guarneri Quartet**—Performing Mozart's Divertimento in E-Flat, K. 563, and Brahms' String Sextet, Op. 18 (with violist Steve Tanenbaum and cellist Timothy Eddy). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**Juilliard String Quartet**—Performing the Bible of counterpoint, J. S. Bach's "The Art of Fugue." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 6 at 8.) . . . ¶ Playing three Mozart string quartets and his D-Major Quintet (with guest violist Walter Trampler). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

**Shanghai String Quartet**—Playing quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, and Barber. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**New York Woodwind Quintet**—Performing music by Reicha, Fauré, and Thea Musgrave, as well as two works by Arthur Berger: an early, tonal C-Major Quartet, and the composer's new revision of his 1984 Wind Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

**Bargemusic**—Solo and chamber music by Fauré, Prokofiev, and Martinů. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Feb. 7 at 7:30 and Feb. 10 at 4.)

**Jeffrey Kahane**—The pianist performs Bach's "Goldberg" Variations. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 7 at 8. Mr. Kahane will also give a lecture-demonstration on Feb. 6 at 6.)

**NYU Chamber Music Society**—Presenting compositions that combine Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Israeli folk idioms with avant-garde techniques. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

**Cello**—The ensemble, so named because it contains four of them, plays arrangements of Bartók, Debussy, Miles Davis, and others, as well as original compositions by Jeff Beal and Ron Carter. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

**Essential Music**—An ensemble that includes soprano Dora Ohrenstein, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, and pianist Judith Gordon performs music by Peter Garland. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Feb. 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

**Beaux Arts Trio**—Performing trios by Haydn and Schubert, as well as the première of Ned Rorem's five-movement "Spring Music," which was commissioned by Carnegie Hall for its centennial season. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

**Roberta Alexander**—Soprano, singing songs by Dvořák, Debussy, Barber, and Ives; with pianist Warren Jones. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

**Shlomo Mintz**—Violin, in a recital of music by Handel, Schubert (his "Arpeggione" Sonata), Suk, and Ravel; assisted by pianist Paul Ostrovsky. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**Kronos Quartet**—Playing contemporary American and Japanese music, including pieces by Terry Riley, John Zorn, and Somei Satoh. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Feb. 8 at 8.) . . . ¶ Performing Alfred Schnittke's String Quartets Nos. 1-4. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**David Doig**—Classical guitar, playing works by Bach, Sor, Villa-Lobos, and others in his New York recital début. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 9 at 8:30.)

**Christina Kiss**—Performing virtuosic piano works by Liszt, including six "Paganini Études" and several opera transcriptions. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 10 at 2.)

**John Perry**—Piano, performing Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, and a new work by Paul Cooper. A benefit concert. (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802. Feb. 10 at 2:30.)

**New York Philharmonic Ensembles**—Members of the orchestra perform a Mozart divertimento, Arnold Bax's "Oboe Quintet," and Schnittke's Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 10 at 3.)

**North/South Consonance**—Contemporary works directed by Manuel Préstamo. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 10 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

**Taverner Consort and Choir**—Directed by Andrew Parrott. The eleven-member group performs Monteverdi's "Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi." (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 10 at 3.) . . . ¶ Performing a re-creation of a Vespers for the feast of St. Theodore, which interweaves plainchant with selections from Monteverdi's "Selva Morale e Spirituale." (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Feb. 12 at 8.)

**msterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet**—Four enfants terribles of the recorder offer a program of Renaissance and Baroque works from England and Italy, as well as modern compositions by Karel van Steenhoven and Pete Rose. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Feb. 10 at 4. For information about tickets, call 666-0675.)

**New York Festival of Song**—Soprano Cyndia Sieden, baritone William Sharp, and pianist Steven Blier perform German lieder from the nineteen-twenties and thirties, including works by Eisler, Weill, Busoni, and Schoenberg. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Feb. 10 at 5.)

**Joan Lippincott**—The organist, who heads the organ department of Westminster Choir College, performs works of Bach, Mozart, Widor, and Jehan Alain. (Brick Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 91st St. Feb. 10 at 5. Admission by contribution.)

**Mozart Chamber Music**—Flutist Eugenia Zukerman, fortepianist Anthony Newman, and the Laurentian String Quartet in a program that includes the G-minor Piano Quartet. Presented by the Friends of Music. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. Feb. 10 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

**André Watts**—The pianist presents a Schubert-and-Ravel program. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 10 at 7:30.)

**Kazuhito Yamashita**—Classical guitar, playing works of Bach, Sor, Takemitsu, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 10 at 7:30.)

**Chelsea Chamber Ensemble**—Following a performance of a string quartet by Haydn, the group traces the composer's influence as displayed in works by Brahms and Martinů. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

**Scott St. John**—The Canadian violinist performs music by Bach, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, Grieg, and Robert Maggio; assisted by pianist Robert Koenig. Presented by Young Concert Audiences. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 12 at 8.)

**Barbara Cadranel**—Harpsichord, playing Baroque and modern works. Included is Mel Powell's "Sonata for Harpsichord," written in 1951 for the late Fernando Valenti, who inadvertently left parts of the manuscript in a taxicab. Ms. Cadranel, who was briefly married to Valenti, recently recovered the missing portions (they turned up in a stack of music under the composer's piano, in California), making this the first complete performance in many years. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

**Gretchen Pusch**—The flutist performs music by Bach, Mozart, and Schubert, in concert, with pianist Thomas Martin. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Feb. 12 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

**Tokyo String Quartet**—Performing music by Beethoven and Brahms, and (with pianist Ilana Vered) the world première of a quintet by Ezra Laderman. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 13 at 8.)

**Boston Camerata**—A semi-staged recounting of the Tristan and Iseult legend through medieval music and poetry, directed by Joel Cohen. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

**New York Camerata**—The chamber ensemble performs Brahms' B-Major Trio, Op. 8; a flute quartet by C.P.E. Bach; and the première of James Primosch's "Weil Alles Unsagbar Ist," a twenty-minute work based on texts by Rilke. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

**Allison Eldredge**—Cello, winner of a 1989 Avery Fisher Career Grant, makes her New York recital début playing works of Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, and Debussy. Her mother, pianist Yoshie Akimoto, accompanies. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 13 at 8.)

### JAZZ / POP / ROCK
### PERSONAL APPEARANCES

**Vanilla Ice**—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Feb. 6 at 7.

**Marion Williams**—St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Feb. 9 at 8.

**"American Folk"**—The first in a series of four concerts features Dewey Balfa and his ensemble and the Maine French Fiddlers Convention. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 9 at 8.)

**Music by Richard Rodgers**—The second concert in this season's "Lyrics & Lyricists" series features songs from "Simple Simon" and "Carousel." With Rex Reed, Jason Graae, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 10 at 2:30 and 8, and Feb. 11 at 2 and 8.)

**Take 6**—In an evening with Ellis Marsalis and Marcus Roberts. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 13-14 at 8.)

## SPORTS

### HOME TEAMS

**Knicks**—Vs. the Boston Celtics, Feb. 7 at 7:30.

**Nets**—Vs. the Miami Heat, Feb. 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Feb. 13. (Game time, 7:30.)

**Rangers**—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Feb. 3. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, Feb. 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Feb. 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Feb. 13. (Game time, 7:30.)

**Islanders**—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Feb. 3 at 5:05. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Feb. 12 at 7:35.

**Devils**—Vs. the Calgary Flames, Feb. 5 at 7:45. . . . ¶ Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Feb. 10 at 5:05.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

**Horses**—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

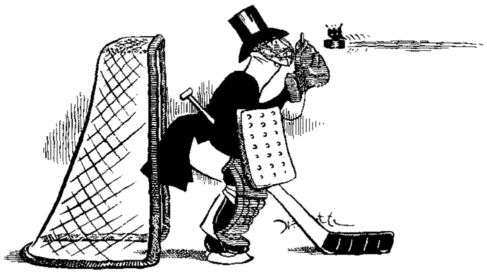
**Boxing**—Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Terry Norris, the W.B.C. super-welterweight champion. Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 9 at 7:30.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**Dog Days**—On Feb. 11-12, the dog world will turn its attention to the hundred-and-fifteenth annual Westminster Kennel Club show. For these two days, Madison Square Garden will have the atmosphere of both an academic convention and a blowout party. Sixty-three golden retrievers, sixty-two dachshunds, forty-three Yorkshire terriers, and hundreds of other canines will be in attendance, along with their breeders, handlers, owners, groomers, and fans. Best-in-show, the prize of prizes, will be awarded on Tuesday night, in time for the eleven-o'clock news. But it's better to see the ceremony in person. Call 465-6000 for information about tickets.

**Spring Bulb Show**—Hyacinths, tulips, crocuses, camelias, irises, cyclamens, paper-whites—all blooming in Brooklyn, at the Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. Starting Feb. 9; open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4.

**Talks**—At the Museum of Modern Art: Lenore French, Bill Irwin, and Swoosie Kurtz talk about movement and comedy, Feb. 5 at 6:30. . . . Molly Haskell and Madeline Kahn talk about the role of the blonde in comic films, Feb. 12 at 6:30. (11 W. 53rd St. For information about tickets, call 708-9795.) . . . ¶ At the Urban Center: Bebe Miller, the choreographer, talks about the impact of New York City on her work, Feb. 10 at 2. (457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. For reservations, call 935-3960.) . . . ¶ At the New York Public Library: Saul Friedländer talks about Nazism, Feb. 11 at 6. (Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.) . . . ¶ At Columbia University's Faculty House: Nina Cassian, Dana Gioia, Christopher Hewitt, Stanley Kunitz, and Naomi Lazard discuss poetry translation, Feb. 13 at 7. (411 W. 116th St. No tickets necessary.)



**Readings**—Feb. 6 at 8: James Schuyler and Barbara Guest read from their own poetry. (D'Agostino Hall, New York University, 110 W. 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 7: Alice Fulton and Charlie Smith read from their own poetry. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: Thylias Moss and Antonia Quintana Pigno read from their own poetry. (Barnard Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 8: Sam Waterston reading from the works of Primo Levi. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For information about tickets, call 645-0905.) . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 8:15: Julia Budenz, Melissa Green, and Kathleen Norris read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 7: Dana Gioia, Michael Palma, Luigi Fontanella, and Judith Baumel read from their own poetry. (Nicholas Roerich Museum, 319 W. 107th St. No tickets necessary.)

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 21.

### EAST SIDE

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Meet the Applegates" (directed by Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 2: The Third Animation Celebration.
Theatre 3: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 7: "Too Much Sun" (Robert Downey), with Robert Downey, Jr., Eric Idle, Ralph Macchio, and Andrea Martin. From Feb. 8: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (Tom Stoppard), with Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 5: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 6: "Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.

**Public Theatre,** 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Rodrigo D: No Future" (Victor Manuel Gaviria; a Colombian film, in Spanish); and "A Tale of the Wind" (1988, Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan; in French), with Ivens.

*Macaulay Culkin in "Home Alone"*

**Movieland 8th Street Triplex,** 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 7: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara. From Feb. 8: "L.A. Story" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 7: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 7: "Flight of the Intruder" (John Milius), with Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, and Brad Johnson. From Feb. 8: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

**Cinema 12,** 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Vanishing" (†).

**Loews 19th Street East 6,** B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: "Meet the Applegates" (Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 7: "Book of Love" (Robert Shaye), with Chris Young, Trisha Leigh Fisher, and Josie Bissett. From Feb. 8: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 5: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 7: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash). From Feb. 8: "L.A. Story" (†).

**Gramercy,** Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

**Bay Cinema,** 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Grifters" (†).

**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean.

**Loews 34th Street Showplace,** 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Meet the Applegates" (Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 3: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

**34th St. East,** 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Awakenings" (†).

**Eastside Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"GoodFellas" (†).

**Sutton 1 and 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 2: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

**Gotham Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through Feb. 7: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

**Plaza,** 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

**Manhattan Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson.
Theatre 2: "Book of Love" (Robert Shaye), with Chris Young, Trisha Leigh Fisher, and Josie Bissett.

**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Lionheart" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

**Baronet and Coronet,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Awakenings" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

**Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue,** 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 3: "Memories of a Marriage" (Kasper Rostrup; in Danish).

**Gemini 1 and 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 7: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis. From Feb. 8: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 7: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field. From Feb. 8: "L.A. Story" (†).

**Beekman,** 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

**Loews New York Twin,** 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

**68th St. Playhouse,** 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Hamlet" (†).

**Loews Tower East,** 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

**U. A. East,** 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Godfather Part III" (†).

**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 7: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

**86th Street East Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

### WEST SIDE

**Film Forum,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 12: "Wait for Me in Heaven" (1987, directed by Antonio Mercero; in Spanish), with Jose Soriano and Chus Lampreave. From Feb. 13: "Larks on a String" (1969, Jiri Menzel; in Czech).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "1900" (†).

**Waverly 1 and 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (†).

**8th St. Playhouse,** 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Hamlet" (†).

**Art Greenwich Twin,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre. 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson.
Theatre 3: "Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 7: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.
Theatre 6: "Awakenings" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 9: "The Grifters" (†).

**23rd St. West Triplex,** 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts.
Theatre 2: "Lionheart" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 3: "Eve of Destruction" (Duncan Gibbins), with Gregory Hines and Renée Soutendijk.

**Guild,** 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Green Card" (†).

**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Meet the Applegates" (Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.
Theatre 3: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson.
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 7: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand and Brad Dourif. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 5: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Edward Scissorhands" (†).

**Loews Festival,** 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Meet the Applegates" (Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman.

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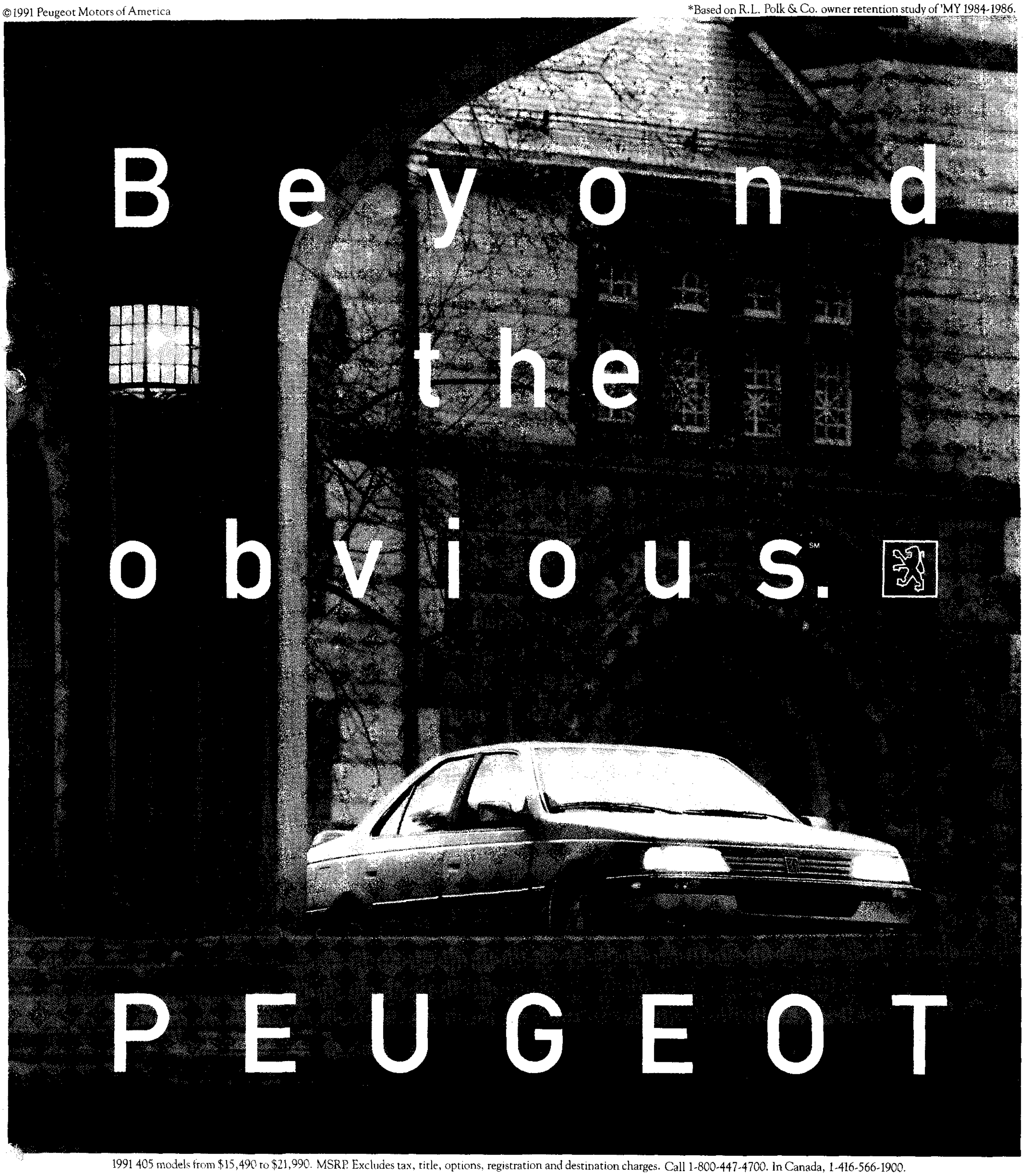

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Evidently, once you've looked beyond the obvious, it is difficult to see anything less.

*Marilyn Monroe gets a mere second billing in two garish 1953 sex or non-sex comedies, "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "How to Marry a Millionaire" (playing February 7 at Theatre 80 St. Marks). But she became a superstar by stealing the show in these clunky, tired farces about women chasing moneyed men. Howard Hawks directed "Blondes" (a musical), so naturally this tale of gold-digger Lorelei Lee (Monroe) and her best friend, Dorothy (Jane Russell), has been dubbed a feminist reversal of male buddy movies. Unfortunately, it's nothing that piquant. "Blondes" could be called "Vice Unrewarded": the gentlemen are such losers that the audience gets no satisfaction when the pheromones hit their targets. At least it has some weirdly amusing numbers. "Millionaire," which centers on a trio of Manhattan models, replays "Blondes" without the songs; it co-stars Lauren Bacall as a hardhead and Betty Grable as a ditz.*

*Monroe is a doozie. In "Blondes," her zesty, uncanny combination of voluptuousness and innocence refreshes the "dumb blonde" stereotype. Monroe's trademark mannerisms are here in full force—the mouth that seems to open halfway involuntarily, the eyelids that flatten and then pop wide apart. She forms them into an idiosyncratic comic style. Whether through instinct or conscious craft, she creates an engaging balancing act. She causes an audience to wonder whether she's in complete control of Lorelei's innuendos. Monroe's hand gestures while singing "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend"—especially on the line "These rocks don't lose their shape"—are unforgettably insouciant. In "Millionaire," she's even more confident. A simple piece of shtick defines her character: she's convinced that men don't make passes at girls who wear glasses, yet she's "blind as a bat" without them. Monroe skillfully stumbles into every available laugh. "Millionaire" is a case of the blind leading the bland.*

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**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"The Sheltering Sky" (†).

**Carnegie Hall Cinema,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Through Feb. 7: "Men of Respect" (William Reilly), with John Turturro, Katherine Borowitz, Dennis Farina, Peter Boyle, and Lilia Skala.

From Feb. 8: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (Tom Stoppard), with Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, and Richard Dreyfuss.

**Carnegie Screening Room,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

**Loews Fine Arts,** 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"Alice (†).

**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Vincent & Theo" (†).

**Loews Paramount,** B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Dances with Wolves" (†).

**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Awakenings" (†).

**Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3,** B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.

Theatre 2: "Taxi Blues" (Pavel Lounguine; in Russian).

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 7: "Rikyu" (Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Rentaro Mikuni and Tsutomu Yamazaki. From Feb. 8: "Ay, Carmela!" (Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura and Andrés Pajares.

**Regency,** B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

**Loews 84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 7: "Book of Love" (Robert Shaye), with Chris Young, Trisha Leigh Fisher, and Josie Bissett. From Feb. 8: "L.A. Story" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).

Theatre 3: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash).

Theatre 4: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

Theatre 6: "Green Card" (†).

**Metro Cinema 1 and 2,** B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Lionheart" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

*Theatre 2: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with* Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

## TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 7: "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts. From Feb. 8: "L.A. Story" (†).

Theatre 4: "Book of Love" (Robert Shaye), with Chris Young, Trisha Leigh Fisher, and Josie Bissett.

Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Feb. 7: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis. From Feb. 8: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

**Embassy 1,** B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Flight of the Intruder" (John Milius), with Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, and Brad Johnson.

**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Eve of Destruction" (Duncan Gibbins), with Gregory Hines and Renée Soutendijk.

Theatre 2: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.

Theatre 3: "The Russia House" (†).

**Loews Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"The Godfather Part III" (†).

**National Twin,** B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 7: "Lionheart" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Feb. 8: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

**West Side Cinema 1 and 2,** 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

Theatre 2: "White Fang" (Randal Kleiser), with Klaus Maria Brandauer, Ethan Hawke, Seymour Cassel, and James Remar.

## REVIVAL HOUSES

**Biograph Cinema,** 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Feb. 4: "Dead End" (1937, directed by William Wyler), with Sylvia Sidney, Joel McCrea, and Humphrey Bogart; and "Come and Get It" (1936, Howard Hawks and Wyler), with Edward Arnold, McCrea, and Frances Farmer.

Feb. 5-6: "The Richest Girl in the World" (1934, William A. Seiter), with Joel McCrea, Miriam Hopkins, Fay Wray, and Henry Stephenson; and "Three Blind Mice" (1938, Seiter), with McCrea, Loretta Young, David Niven, Stuart Erwin, and Marjorie Weaver.

Feb. 7-9: "Grand Hotel" (1932, Edmund Goulding), with Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, and Wallace Beery; and "The Single Standard" (1929, John S. Robertson; silent), with Garbo, Nils Asther, John Mack Brown, and Dorothy Sebastian.

Feb. 10-11: "Anna Karina" (1935, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Fredric March, Basil Rathbone, and Maureen O'Sullivan; and "Mata Hari" (1932, George Fitzmaurice), with Garbo, Ramon Novarro, Lionel Barrymore, and Lewis Stone.

Feb. 12-13: "Susan Lenox, Her Fall and Rise" (1931, Robert Z. Leonard), with Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, and Alan Hale; and "As You Desire Me" (1932, George Fitzmaurice), with Garbo, Erich von Stroheim, Melvyn Douglas, and Owen Moore.

**Cinema Village,** 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

Through Feb. 12: "Straight for the Heart" (Leo Pael; in French).

From Feb. 13: "A Room with a View" (James Ivory), with Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Helena Bonham-Carter, Julian Sands, and Daniel Day-Lewis; and "Maurice" (1987, Ivory), with James Wilby, Hugh Grant, and Rupert Graves.

**Film Forum 2,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through Feb. 5: "Alphaville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine. Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff; and "All Boys Are Called Patrick" (1957, Godard; in French).

Feb. 6-7: "Hail Mary" (1985, Jean-Luc Godard; in French); and "First Name: Carmen" (1984, Godard; in French), with Maruschka Detmers, Joseph Jacques Bonaffi, and Godard.

Feb. 8-12: "Carmen Jones" (†); and "St. Louis Blues" (1958, Allen Reisner), with Nat King Cole, Eartha Kitt, Pearl Bailey, and Cab Calloway.

From Feb. 13: "Home of the Brave" (1949, Mark Robson), with Frank Lovejoy, Lloyd Bridges, Douglas Dick, and James Edwards; and "Lost Boundaries" (1949, Alfred Werker), with Beatrice Pearson and Mel Ferrer.

**Theatre 80 St. Marks,** 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Feb. 4: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabel Corey and Roger Duchesne; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.

Feb. 5: "Goldfinger" (1954, Guy Hamilton), with Sean Connery, Gert Frobe, Honor Blackman, and Shirley Eaton; and "From Russia with Love" (1964, Terence Young), with Connery, Robert Shaw, and Lotte Lenya.

Feb. 6: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.

Feb. 7: "How to Marry a Millionaire" (see blurb at left) and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (see blurb at left).

Feb. 8-9: "Notorious" (1946, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, and Louis Calhern; and "Spellbound" (†).

Feb. 10: "Interiors" (1978, Woody Allen), with Diane Keaton, Maureen Stapleton, Geraldine Page, Mary Beth Hurt, Sam Waterston, and E.G. Marshall; and "Love and Death" (1975, Allen), with Allen and Keaton.

Feb. 11: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Andersson, and Nils Poppe.

Feb. 12: "Local Hero" (1983, Bill Forsyth), with Peter Riegert, Denis Lawson, Fulton MacKay, and Burt Lancaster; and "Restless Natives" (1986, Michael Hoffman), with Vincent Friell.

Feb. 13: "The Stranger" (1946, Orson Welles), with Welles, Edward G. Robinson, and Loretta Young; and "Mr. Arkadin" (1955, Welles), with Welles, Michael Redgrave, Patricia Medina, and Akim Tamiroff.

## FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Feb. 4 at 2:30: "Hard, Fast, and Beautiful" (1951, directed by Ida Lupino), with Claire Trevor and Sally Forrest.... ¶ Feb. 4 at 6: "The Light That Failed" (1939, William A. Wellman), with Ronald Colman, Lupino, and Walter Huston.... ¶ Feb. 5 at 2:30: "The Hitch-hiker" (1953, Lupino), with Edmond

O'Brien, Frank Lovejoy, and William Wallman. . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 6: "Never Fear" (1950, Lupino), with Forrest, Keefe Brasselle, and Hugh O'Brien. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 2:30: "Not Wanted" (1949, Elmer Clifton), with Forrest, Brasselle, and Leo Penn. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 3 and 6: "No Comments" (1984) and "First Day of School" (1990), both documentaries, directed by Lasse Naukkarinen. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 3: "Outrage" (1950, Lupino), with Mala Powers and Tod Andrews. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 2:30: "They Drive by Night" (1940, Raoul Walsh), with Lupino, Ann Sheridan, and Humphrey Bogart. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 3: "Plain Talk & Common Sense" (1968, Jon Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 6: "The Hitch-hiker." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 6: "Chameleon" (1978, Jost), with Bob Glaudini. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2: "The Bigamist" (1953, Lupino), with Lupino, Edmond O'Brien, and Joan Fontaine. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2:30: "Canyon" (1970), "12 Fragments & 3 Narratives from Life" (1968), "Fall Creek" (1970), and "Lampensieber" (1980), all directed by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 5: "High Sierra" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 5: "Nightshift" (1980, Robina Rose). . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 2: "Not Wanted." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 2:30: "Beauty Sells Best" (1978), "Primaries" (1971), "Godard 80" (1980), and "Susannah's Film" (1969), all directed by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 5: "They Drive by Night." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 5: "Bell Diamond" (1987, Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 2:30: "Private Hell" (1954, Don Siegel), with Lupino, Steve Cochran, and Howard Duff. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 3: "Stagefright" (1981, Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 6: "The Bigamist." . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 6:30: "Tyger Tyger" (1990) and "Fauve" (1990), both directed by Donna Cameron, who will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 2:30: "High Sierra" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 6: "Road House" (1948, Jean Negulesco), with Lupino, Richard Widmark, and Celeste Holm.

**Museum of Broadcasting,** 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians and people who influenced them. Dennis Miller: Feb. 5-9: Excerpts from the television work of Miller and Steve Allen. . . . Whoopi Goldberg: From Feb. 12: "Whoopi Goldberg . . . Directed from Broadway" (1985, HBO) and "The Ernie Kovacs Show" (1956, NBC). Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ James Dean television appearances. Feb. 5-9: "Keep Our Honor Bright" (1953, NBC), an episode of "Kraft Television Theatre"; and "The Evil Within" (1953, ABC), an episode of "Tales of Tomorrow," with Rod Steiger. . . . From Feb. 12: "Harvest" (1953, NBC), an episode of "Robert Montgomery Presents," with Dorothy Gish and Ed Begley; and a tribute to Dean on "The Steve Allen Show" (1956, NBC). Showings Tuesdays at 2 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2. . . . ¶ "On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." Feb. 5-9: "Julie and Carol at Carnegie Hall" (1962, CBS), with Julie Andrews and Carol Burnett; and "Carnegie Hall Salutes Jack Benny" (1961, CBS). . . . From Feb. 12: "New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra" (1943, CBS) and "What Does Music Mean?" (1958, CBS), the première show of the "Young People's Concerts" series, conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30.

**Anthology Film Archives,** 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Feb. 4 at 7 and Feb. 7 at 5: "Friends Forever" (1986, Stefan Henszelman; in Danish). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 9 and Feb. 8 at 11: "Virgin Machine" (1988, Monika Treut; in German). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 7: "Tongues United" (1989, Marlon T. Riggs) and "Flesh & Paper" (1990, Pratibha Parmar). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 9 and Feb. 8 at 7: "Coming Out" (1989, Heiner Carow). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 5 and Feb. 9 at 7: "Life on Earth as I Know It" (1989, Penny McDonald), "How to Kill Her" (1989, Ana Maria Simo), "Can't You Take a Joke?" (1989, Viki Dun), and "Justine's Film" (1989, Jeanne Crepeau). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 7: "Comrades in Arms" (1990, Stuart Marshall) and "Flames of Passion" (1990, Richard Kwietniowski). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 8: "The Personal File of Anna Akhmatova" (1989, Semyon Aranovitch). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 9: "Looking for Langston" (1989, Isaac Julien) and "Trojans" (1990, Constantine Giannaris). . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 7: "Vera" (1986, Sergio Toledo). . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 9 and Feb. 9 at 3: "Beyond Gravity" (1988, Gartn Maxwell) and "Night Out" (1989, Lawrence Johnson). . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 7: A program of five short films from Artists Space. . . . ¶ Feb. 8-9 at 9:30: Two different programs of Japanese experimental films. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 5: "Desire" (1989, Stuart Marshall). . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 9: "A Question of Silence" (1983, Marleen Gorris). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 1: "Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box" (1987, Michelle Parkerson) and two short films by Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 5: "Pink Narcissus" (1970, Jim Bidgood). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 9: "Summer Vacation 1999" (1988, Shusuke Kaneko; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 11: "Nocturne" (1990, Joy Chamberlain) and "Because the Dawn" (1988, Amy Goldstein). . . . ¶ Feb. 9-10 at 6: Two different programs of short Stan Brakhage films. . . . ¶ Feb. 9-10 at 8 and Feb. 13 at 8:30: Three different programs of recent avant-garde films and videos. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 7: Four short films by James Broughton.

**Donnell Library Center,** 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Feb. 5 at noon: "James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket" (1989, Karen Thorsen). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 2:30: "Stormy Weather" (1943, Andrew L. Stone), with Lena Horne, Bill Robinson, Cab Calloway, and Fats Waller. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at noon: "Lambert & Co." (1964) and "Don't Look Back" (1966), both by D. A. Pennebaker.

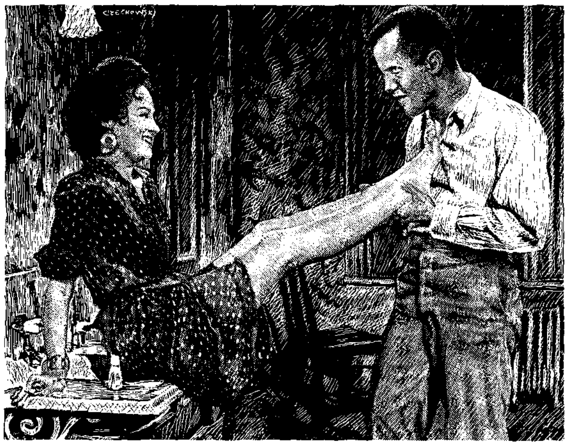
**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077) —"From Harlem to Hollywood: The 1970s New Black Cinema." Feb. 9 at 2: "The Learning Tree" (1969, Gordon Parks, Sr.), with Kyle Johnson, Alex Clarke, and Estelle Evans. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 4: "Cotton Comes to Harlem" (1970, Ossie Davis), with Godfrey Cambridge and Raymond St. Jacques. . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 4: "Sounder" (1972, Martin Ritt), with Cicely Tyson and Paul Winfield.

**Whitney Museum,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Feb. 5 and Feb. 9 at 2: "How to Kill Her" (1989, Ana Maria Simo) and "She Must Be Seeing Things" (1987, Sheila McLaughlin). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 and Feb. 7 at 6: "Age 12: Love with a Little L" (1990, Jennifer Montgomery), "Welcome to Normal" (1990, Sadie Benning), "The Way of the Wicked" (1989, Christine Vachon), and "Damned if You Don't" (1987, Su Friedrich). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 2: "The Man Who Envied Women" (1985, Yvonne Rainer). . . . ¶ Feb. 8 and Feb. 10 at 2: "Illusions" (1982, Julie Dash) and "Two Lies" (1989, Pam Tom). . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 2: "Martina's Playhouse" (1989, Peggy Ahwesh) and "Committed" (1984, Lynne Tillman and Sheila McLaughlin). . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 5: "A Different Image" (1981, Alile Sharon Larkin) and "Cycles" (1989, Zeinabu Irene Davis). . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 2: "Surname Viet: Given Name Nam" (1989, Trinh T. Minh-ha).

**Japan Society,** 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Feb. 4 at 6:30: "Stray Dog" (1973, Azuma Morisaki; in Japanese), with Tetsuya Watari. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 6:30: "Violence at Noon" (1966, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese), with Kei Sato. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 6:30: "Jun" (1978, Hiroto Yokoyama; in Japanese), with Jun Eto. Mr. Yokoyama will be present.

**Florence Gould Hall,** 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160) —Feb. 6 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Sugar Cane Alley" (1983, Euzhan Palcy; in French), with Garry Cadenat. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Life and Nothing But" (1989, Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Philippe Noiret, Sabine Azéma, and Pascale Vignal.

**Collective for Living Cinema,** 41 White St. (925-2111)—Feb. 8-14 at 8: "Tribulation 99" (Craig Baldwin) and "Forevermore" (Eric Saks).



*Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte in "Carmen Jones"*

**Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building,** 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Feb. 8 at 1 and 4:10: "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary"; and "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook. . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 6: "Ida B. Welles" (1989, William Greaves), "Visions of the Spirit: A Portrait of Alice Walker" (Elena Featherston), "Hairpiece" (Ayoka Chenzira), and "Syvilla: They Dance to Her Drum" (Chenzira). . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 1 and 4:05: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door"; and "The Final Comedown" (1972, Oscar Williams), with Billy Dee Williams, D'Urville Martin, and Raymond St. Jacques. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 6: "Abby" (1974, William Girdler), with William Marshall, Carol Speed, and Terry Carter; and "Def by Temptation" (1990, James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison, Bill Nunn, and Rony Clanton.

## IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

**Alice**—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews Fine Arts.)

**Awakenings**—With Robert De Niro and Robin Williams, directed by Penny Marshall. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th St. East, Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

**Carmen Jones** (1954)—The setting of Bizet's "Carmen" has been changed from Mérimée Spain to Jacksonville, Florida, and Meilhac and Halévy's libretto has been rewritten by Oscar Hammerstein II, who provides colloquial, rather basic lyrics, but the music retains much of its excitement in this flamboyant version with an all-black cast. Dorothy Dandridge is a marvellous-looking Carmen—fiery and petulant, with whiplash hips in a hot-pink skirt. (Her singing is dubbed by Marilyn Horne.) The man Carmen destroys is played by Harry Belafonte, who seems miscast and miserable (he's also dubbed). It's somewhat frustrating to watch performers who *can* sing but aren't allowed to; of the principals, only Pearl Bailey sings in her own voice—she comes up with a whacking rendition of the Gypsy Song. She's pure comic energy up there in the center of the screen, and the director, Otto Preminger, seems to just stand back, enjoying her, like the rest of us. Made from a hit Broadway musical, this movie is terribly uneven—best when it's gaudy and electric, worst in its more realistically staged melodramatic moments, especially toward the end. Over all, it's an entertaining show, choreographed by Herbert Ross, featuring the dancers Carmen de Lavallade and Archie Savage, and with a cast that includes Diahann Carroll, Olga James, Joe Adams, Nick Stewart, and Brock Peters, who plays Sgt. Brown and also dubs the singing voice of Rum, played by Roy Glenn. Adapted to the screen by Harry Kleiner; art direction by Edward L. Ilou.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 8-12.)

**Dances with Wolves**—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

**Edward Scissorhands**—A Transylvanian castle rises high in the air out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest, magically daffy), makes a call on the macabre, tumbledown place and discovers an adolescent fairy-tale boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), with two collections of long, sharp shears where his hands should be. (He was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor—Vincent Price, in flashbacks—who died before he could attach the hands he had prepared.) Peg invites the boy to come home with her. At first, this movie, directed by Tim Burton, has a lovely comic spirit, but when the suburbanites think Edward is dangerous and turn against him, the material turns into cheesy, plot-centered melodrama. It has a central flaw: the idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch is pre-interpreted. He's the pure creative artist who can't be around people because he can't help hurting them; he's the woeful misunderstood kid. Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton—he's Burton saying, "I've always been a sweet guy." (The picture becomes Christmassy and angelic.) With Winona Ryder.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Ziegfeld.)

**The Godfather Part III**—Lightning didn't strike three times. It's a big, ambitious project, and it looks like the first two "Godfather" movies, but the internal force has vanished, and the quality of feeling—what gave the films their lyricism and made the public bond with them—is gone. In the first two pictures the director, Francis Ford Coppola, took opportunistic, sensationalist material and turned it into drama. Now he doesn't transform the sensationalist material (the Corleones' involvement in Vatican swindles); he just presents it, with an aura of solemnity. With Al Pacino as the morose godfather, Andy Garcia as his successor, and Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, Eli Wallach, Joe Mantegna, Donal Donnelly, Raf Vallone, Bridget Fonda, Sofia Coppola, George Hamilton, Franc D'Ambrosio, and Helmut Berger. Written by the director and Mario Puzo.—P.K. (1/14/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

**GoodFellas**—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

**Green Card**—A limp, dispirited romantic comedy, written and directed by Peter Weir. A rather prissy horticulturist (Andie MacDowell) agrees to an in-name-only marriage to a Frenchman (Gérard Depardieu); he needs a green card to stay in New York, and she needs to show that she's married in order to get past the stuffy co-op board of the building in which she wants to buy an apartment. They meet (for the first time) at City Hall, do the deed, and separate, until several months later, when they're forced to pretend that their union is real—that they aren't strangers but devoted partners who know every little thing about each other. This is a serviceable premise for a screwball comedy, but the screwball is apparently not one of Weir's best pitches: the movie is as flat and lifeless as a hanging curve. Depardieu—as shaggy and hefty as ever—is a skillful comedian, and he looks as if he's having a great time. Not even his vivid presence is enough to rescue this wan little picture. Also with Bebe Neuwirth and Gregg Edelman.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Quad Cinema, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

**The Grifters**—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Myra (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chisellers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. film noir. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord: we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what *film noir* thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Bay Cinema, Coronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**Hamlet**—Franco Zeffirelli gives Shakespeare's tragedy the ripping-yarns treatment: a dashing star (Mel Gibson); lavish sets and costumes; a generous amount of swordplay and leaping about; and just enough text to enable the audience to follow the story. Zeffirelli and his co-screenwriter, Christopher De Vore, have cut the play to an acceptable prestige-picture running time of two hours and fifteen minutes; you get the feeling that they would have eliminated Hamlet's tortured, action-retarding soliloquies if they could have done so without losing all those famous lines. The movie isn't exactly dull, but it doesn't feel like "Hamlet," either. The play's alternating rhythms of action and reflection have been flattened to a single tempo, brisk but monotonous. Gibson's performance is competent and enjoyable. He isn't interesting, though, and that's probably not entirely his fault—the intellectual vacuity of the production leaves him stranded. Among the all-star supporting cast, Ian Holm (as Polonius) and Paul Scofield (as the ghost of Hamlet's father) do the best work. Also with Glenn Close (as Gertrude) and Helena Bonham-Carter (as Ophelia). Cinematography by David Watkin.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

**High Sierra** (1941)—This Humphrey Bogart picture, directed by Raoul Walsh, set a new style in gangster movies—the aging outlaw as an anachronism in a changing world. Bogart's performance as the weary Dillinger-like ex-convict—the man who just wants to pull off one more job so he can get out of what has become just a dirty business—is a classic. The film romanticizes this last-of-a-breed figure, but it's smart enough to romanticize him in a hard-edged, realistic way, and Bogart is convincingly—often excitingly—tense and tired. About half the movie is definitive; the other half is sunk in a maudlin subplot about the outlaw's love for a lame girl (Joan Leslie, maddeningly fresh-faced). With Ida Lupino, Alan Curtis, Arthur Kennedy, Henry Hull, Barton MacLane, Cornel Wilde, Henry Travers, Jerome Cowan, Minna Gombell, Donald MacBride, Willie Best, Isabel Jewell, Elisabeth Risdon, and George Meeker.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 9 and Feb. 12.)

**L. A. Story**—With Steve Martin, Victoria Tennant, and Richard E. Grant; directed by Mick Jackson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center; starting Feb. 8.)

**Mr. & Mrs. Bridge**—An adaptation, by the Merchant-Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us; they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema II.)

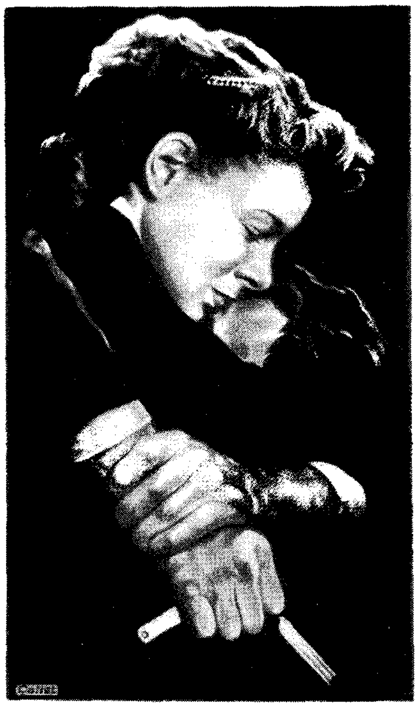
**1900** (1977)—Bernardo Bertolucci's utopian folly is about two boys born in the North Italian region of Emilia-Romagna on the same day in 1901. Alfredo (Robert De Niro) is the heir to the vast landholdings of his grandfather

(Burt Lancaster), and Olmo (Gérard Depardieu) is the bastard grandson of the patriarch (Sterling Hayden) of the peasant clan that lives on those holdings and labors for a share of the crop. Bertolucci is trying to transcend the audience appeal of his lyrical, psychological films. He is trying to make a people's film by drawing on the mythology of movies, as if it were a collective memory. "1900" is a romantic moviegoer's vision of the class struggle—a love poem for the movies as well as for the life of those who live communally on the land. (The belief that permeates the movie is that Communism will preserve the folk culture of the peasants.) In form, it's an opera-novel, and its homage is to Verdi, the great Emilian who died on the day of the boys' birth; it has all of Bertolucci's themes and motifs, and one could call it the Portable Bertolucci, though it isn't portable. It's like a course to be enrolled in, with a guaranteed horror every hour; there are also sequences as great as any ever filmed. The cast includes Dominique Sanda, Alida Valli, Donald Sutherland, Stefania Sandrelli, and Laura Betti. Cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; music by Ennio Morricone. This is not the cut version that opened in this country in 1977; it's the full version, and it runs five hours and eleven minutes.—P.K. (Film Forum.)

**Postcards from the Edge**—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. Nichols keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.) The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless, yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. (Nichols is acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.) There are a lot of people to look at: Gene Hackman, Dennis Quaid, Richard Dreyfuss, Annette Bening, Robert Bartlett, CCH Pounder, Oliver Platt, Gary Morton, Mary Wickes, Rob Reiner, Simon Callow, Michael Ontkean, Pepe Serna, and Dana Ivey. The screenplay, by Carrie Fisher (with Nichols' uncredited collaboration), is based on her novel; cinematography by Michael Ballhaus. P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

**Reversal of Fortune**—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens. Music by Mark Isham.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Quad Cinema.)

**The Russia House**—Fred Schepisi's movie, based on the novel by John le Carré, is an immensely satisfying entertainment. It's an espionage thriller in which things are much, much simpler than they appear to be—a notion that all but subverts the premises of the genre. As is usual in such stories, there are important secrets up for grabs; here they're contained in a manuscript written by a top Soviet defense scientist, Yakov (Klaus Maria Brandauer). The scientist has tried to put this document in the hands of a man he considers a kindred spirit—an alcoholic, saxophone-playing English publisher named Barley Blair (Sean Connery)—but it winds up in the possession of the intelligence professionals of the C.I.A. and MI-6, who then involve Barley in a complicated espionage operation. In this story, the fine-tuned paranoia of the Cold War seems almost comic. The screenplay, by Tom Stoppard, is cleverly constructed, and Schepisi—a virtuoso at making complex action lucid—gives the picture an even, flowing rhythm; he knows that the thriller elements are a farcical counterpoint to the real story, in which all the thrills are emotional ones. The move diagrams the moves of the professional-spy game while keeping our attention focussed on the amateurs: Barley, Yakov, and Katya (Michelle Pfeiffer), the beautiful woman who acts as a messenger for Yakov and falls in love with Barley. This is a great role for Sean Connery; he gives his richest, most affecting performance. And he and Pfeiffer are superby matched, because they're both direct, unfussy actors. The Russian scenery is lovingly photographed by Ian Baker, and the supporting cast provides small delights throughout. (James Fox and Ken Russell are particularly good.) This movie's professionalism is bracing because the enthusiasm and the generous spirit of the amateur are still in evidence.—T.R. (12/31/90) (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Loews New York Twin, and Embassy.)



*The "Spellbound" poster: Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck*

**The Sheltering Sky**—Published in 1949, Paul Bowles' semi-autobiographical account of his marriage fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy; the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself. Bernardo Bertolucci's attenuated film version filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror. The movie is about Kit (Debra Winger) giving over to another way of seeing; it's about the shift in her psyche as she becomes a contented love slave and moves away from the verbal, from definitions and categories and neuroses. Bertolucci appears to have lost interest in pace and excitement and verve; he goes deep into monotony. (The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad.) With John Malkovich as Port (who's full of smug self-hatred), Campbell Scott as Tunner, Jill Bennett, Timothy Spall, and Bowles (at seventy-nine) as some sort of presiding expatriate sage.—P.K. (12/17/90) (57th St. Playhouse.)

**Sleeping with the Enemy**—With Julia Roberts, Patrick Bergin, and Kevin Anderson; directed by Joseph Ruben. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and National Twin; starting Feb. 8.)

**Spellbound** (1945)—The idea is intriguing: a murder mystery set among a group of psychoanalysts, with a solution to be arrived at by clues found in a dream. It was carried out by one of the most highly publicized collaborations of all time: Alfred Hitchcock and Salvador Dali, with Ben Hecht writing the script. Ingrid Bergman is the analyst, Gregory Peck her amnesiac patient—the murder suspect. Yet, with all the obvious ingredients for success, "Spellbound" is a disaster. It was fitting that the actress who was once described as a "fine, strong, cow-country maiden" should be cast as a good, solid analyst, dispensing cures with the wholesome simplicity of a mother adding wheat germ to the family diet, but Bergman's apple-cheeked sincerity has rarely been as out of place as in this confection whipped up by jaded chefs. With Michael Chekhov, John Emery, and Leo G. Carroll. Academy Award for Best Original Score (!), to Miklós Rózsa.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 8-9.)

**The Vanishing**—George Sluizer's film has a simple, powerful thriller hook: a young Dutch woman, Saskia (the radiant Johanna Ter Steege), vacationing in the South of France with her boyfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets), walks into a highway rest stop to buy soda and beer and never comes back. Rex's search for Saskia, which takes place over several years, produces suspense of an unusually melancholy kind. This fiendishly intelligent little movie is adapted from a novel called "The Golden Egg," by the Dutch writer Tim Krabbé (who collaborated with Sluizer on the adaptation), and its form is essentially literary. It's a sophisticated example of the sort of hermetic intellectual mysteries that Borges is famous for; the fates of Saskia and Rex are worked out with an almost geometric precision. But the movie's rigor isn't alienating, and its symmetries are evocative rather than merely clever. The film is about ordinary lives interrupted, hijacked out of time, and Sluizer, with documentary-style attentiveness to detail, does justice to the varied beauty of ordinariness. The narrative is constructed with flawless elegance, but the movie is far less self-contained than it seems: traces of deep feeling keep escaping from the artifice, like puffs of breath into cold, thin air, and these wispy, ephemeral indications of unself-conscious life haunt us when the story is over. Not many thrillers have the sort of suggestiveness this picture has. It's a small classic. Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu gives a chilling performance as the perverse, enigmatic villain. In Dutch and French.—T.R. (1/28/91) (Cinema 12.)

**Vincent & Theo**—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from the other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo. The cinematography is by Jean Lepine, the production design is by Stephen Altman, the score is by Gabriel Yared; all three rise to the occasion.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3.)

**Jones New York** Suiting takes a sarong turn with a spice-tone floral mini and softly tailored jacket. Black rayon/linen jacket, $148; silk blouse, $78; rayon sarong, $85. Sizes 4-16. Clubhouse on Three, Herald Square and selected Macy's.

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THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## *Notes and Comment*

A FRIEND writes:

After waffling back and forth, I decided to go to the big anti-war rally in Washington. Shortly before 6 A.M. on Saturday, when I got to the corner of Ninety-Sixth Street and Broadway and joined several hundred demonstrators standing in the cold waiting for their buses, I realized that the movement against the Gulf war was going to be different from the movement against the Vietnam war. Not nearly so young, for one thing. This group included far more elderly and middle-aged people than any Vietnam protest in my experience, and in other ways as well it could almost have been a random sample of the neighborhood. There were people on my bus who, caught up in the early euphoria of the war, had hoped for a speedy American victory, and there were a few who even now admitted to feeling some discomfort about their dissent. A man sitting a couple of rows in front of me was worried that Saddam Hussein might "draw sustenance" from the demonstration. Behind me, somebody said he couldn't help thinking that inaction "might permit this person to accumulate atomic and chemical weapons, which he would use against Israel, and we might end up having to fight him five years from now."

In the parking lot of Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, my bus converged with hundreds of others, from which thousands of demonstrators began making their way toward the Metro, and thence to the Mall. This was going to be an unusually orderly demonstration, I could see, but the placards—almost all of them homemade—were full of feeling: "This Is No Movie," "Bush, Take Care of Your House First," "Congress, Grow a Spine," "Why Is There Always Enough Money for War?," "Okay, Okay, You're Not a Wimp—Now Can We Go Home?," "No Blood for Testosterone," and innumerable variations on "Support Our Troops—Bring 'Em Back Alive," which was the closest thing to an official slogan of the day. There was also a sign saying "Bones Not Bombs," carried by a low-slung dog named Elmo, who—so his friends Michael and Abby explained to me—had made the trip from Baltimore partly because of his commitment to peace and partly because "he would tear our apartment to pieces if we left him home."

In loose ranks about thirty people wide, we headed up Pennsylvania Avenue past the White House (the procession lasted more than three hours, according to Sunday's Washington *Post*), and circled our way back to the Ellipse for a late-afternoon program of speeches and songs. Along the way, it seemed to me, the marchers were looking each other over and gradually coming to feel something more than relief about the company they were keeping. It's not easy to question a war against an enemy who aims missiles at the citizens of an uninvolved nation, puts zombie-like P.O.W.s on TV to denounce their countries, and pours millions of gallons of oil into the sea. It's not easy to think about right and wrong when the voices of authority—the all but indistinguishable cast of government officials, experts, and correspondents who crowd the airwaves these days—talk endlessly about strategy and counter-strategy. Sitting at home by my TV set, I had felt not only horror at Saddam Hussein's deeds and potential deeds but (as someone brought up on Vietnam) an unfamiliar pride in our armed forces and their commanders. And the arguments against the war, which had been clear enough to me before it started, had begun to seem unreal—or perhaps I should say that *I* had begun to seem unreal for clinging to them. But now, surrounded by well over a hundred thousand fellow-citizens who had been through something like the same experience and had been unable to suppress their doubts, I felt the life being knocked back into me.

This is your Park
KEEP IT
CLEAN

In the placards, in conversations, and in the speeches, I heard things I had not been hearing on TV. A number of people spoke of a swagger in the public statements of the men running the White House and the Pentagon. "It seems to me that they're like a bunch of little boys out with their pistols playing cops and robbers," Sister Virginia Dorgan, who works at the soup kitchen at the Church of St. Gregory the Great, commented during the bus ride down, and Barbara Low, who was sitting across the aisle, said, "This is basically a macho war—we're trying to prove that we're not really second-rate."

Another recurring theme was the hollowness—as most of the demonstrators perceived it—of the Administration's efforts at diplomacy. "We had five months of military buildup and threats—we had five minutes of talks," one of the speakers declared. And though the marchers had no better information than anyone else about Iraqi casualties, they, unlike the TV newspeople, seemed unable to avert their minds from the thought of what it might be like to be a civilian in Baghdad or a soldier in Kuwait when our B-52s came in. Harriet Levy, a semi-retired schoolteacher whom I met on the bus, expressed concern that the geographical insulation of the United States had made war too easy.

The press itself was a major source of exasperation. "Too much of not enough," said Irene Marcuse, an aspiring social worker. Elizabeth Vecchione, who teaches nursing at City College, said, "I hate those glib names that the networks give their coverage —'America at War' and 'Showdown in the Gulf.' "

One of the speeches that the crowd seemed most pleased to hear was that of Laura Flanders, of the media-watchdog organization Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting. Ms. Flanders said she wanted to know why none of the TV news shows seemed willing to treat leaders of the anti-war movement as experts fit to be invited into a studio and interviewed. She also described a report by Ted Koppel, of ABC, in which, at the end of a day that had seen more than a thousand allied bombing sorties against Iraq and Kuwait, he declared, "Since that Scud missile hit Tel Aviv earlier today, it has been a quiet night in the Middle East."

As the out-of-town demonstrators flocked into the Metro for their return trip to the stadium, a sense of camaraderie took hold. In our packed car, a couple of teen-agers wrapped in American flags began singing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" with an "On that farm he had some anti-war protesters" verse, and everybody joined in. I got home in time to catch the eleven-o'clock news on Channel 4, which gave the demonstration about thirty seconds. CBS, I am told, disposed of it in something closer to twenty seconds, and the *Times* put it on page 17. I guess the anti-war movement can't quite say that it has aroused the nation. But it has aroused itself, which is a first step.

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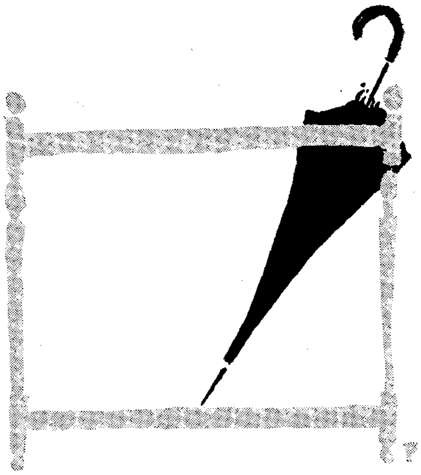
## *Dream Come True*

The Ballpark—on Steinway Street, just off Grand Central Parkway, in Astoria—is everything that the four Karalekas brothers (Chris, thirty-one; George, thirty; Pete, twenty-seven; and Gus, twenty) dreamed of when they dreamed of opening a giant sports bar. The Ballpark has twenty-seven hanging television monitors, three dish antennas, and two big screens. It also has a boxing glove signed by Muhammad Ali, a basketball signed by Walt Frazier, and a big color photograph of Pete Rose (before). Chris Karalekas, the smoothest talker of the brothers, told us that their place was a natural for the New York singing début of former-world-heavyweight-champion boxer Larry Holmes, because the last time he and Holmes met they'd really hit if off. "Larry remembered my sincerity a while back, and at that time we struck a certain chord, a certain human chord," Chris said on the evening of the show. "It transcended black, it transcended white. It was a beautiful thing, and that's why sports is wonderful."

The show was supposed to start at eight, but at eight-fifteen Larry, as everyone was already calling him, was still downstairs in the men's room changing and the Karalekases were upstairs worrying about the crowd. There were hundreds of eight-by-ten Larry Holmes glossies to be signed but only about thirty people to dedicate them to. "The other night, it was packed," our waitress said. "Tonight, I don't know what's happening." When Marmalade, Larry's band, shuffled out to warm everybody up, the customers on hand seemed distracted. The Simone family, for instance—George, Linda, and George, Jr.—who live a few blocks away, had one eye on the Knicks and the other on the Flyers. Jimmy Leavy, a twelve-year-old from Woodside, walked around taking pictures with his brother's Nikon and kept accidentally bumping into the waitresses. A guy in the back warmed up the pinball machine. These were not music lovers, per se; they had come only to see the onetime champ.



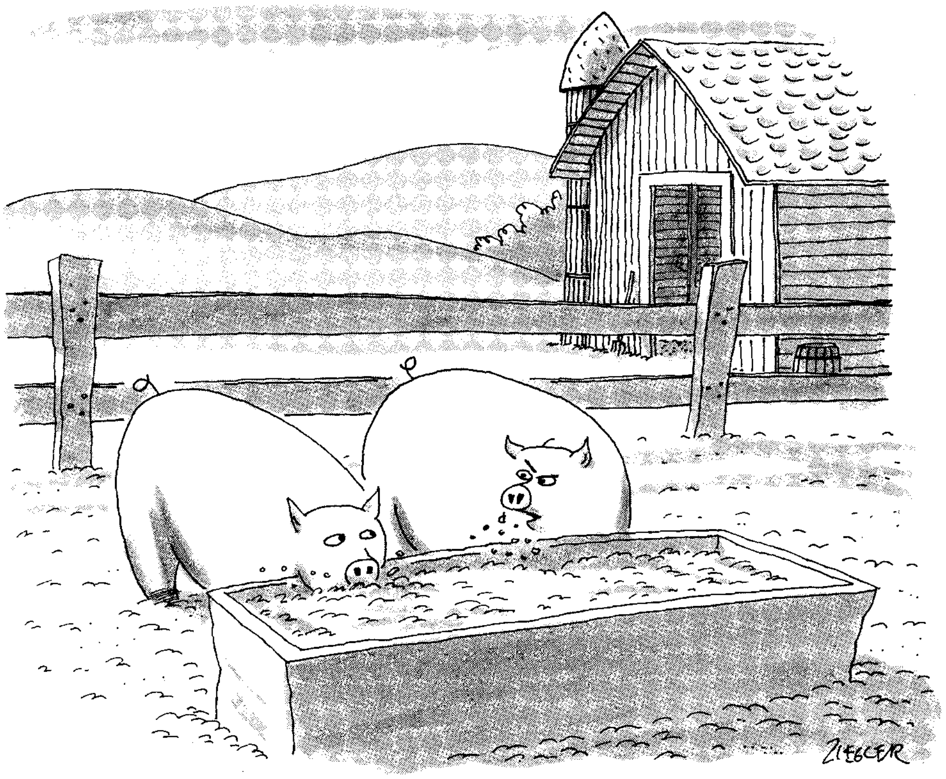
Finally, at eight-forty, a cluster of cameramen, which included a two-man crew from "Entertainment Tonight"; Jimmy Leavy; John Manown, a free-lance video consultant and a friend of the Karalekases'; and Linda Simone ("My husband, he wants lots of pictures," she said) intuitively crowded at the foot of the stage. Like a ring announcer, Chris Karalekas stepped up onstage to introduce Larry, as "the former world champion and still in our eyes a world champion." Larry, dressed in a shining silver suit, lumbered upstairs. The Simones, the Leavys, the Karalekases, and the Ballpark's staff all cheered.

Larry kicked the first set off with "It's a New Day," but there was trouble with the sound system, and the audience again became distracted. Jimmy Leavy went off to play the coin-operated basketball game, and scored twenty-four points; the Simones whispered to each other. For a minute, Larry seemed to perk up again, with a near-rousing rendition of "Brick House," but "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted" finished him off. As the champ headed for the Karalekases' V.I.P. room, he had to be a little concerned.

At halftime, the fans did what fans do best: they reviewed the first-half action. Jimmy Leavy, though he was born a few years too late to remember Larry's seven-year reign as champion, said, "I think tonight he proved to everyone that he can both box and sing." Jimmy's older brother, John, was a little more blunt. "He's not so great," he said. Then John Manown, the video consultant, who also directs lighting, jumped in. "You're basically taking a guy off the street who's not groomed to be a performer," he said. "It's like a fish-out-of-water situation." George Simone, nursing a glass of Scotch, said he wanted to wait and hear Mike Tyson sing. All kinds of theories were offered to account for the poor turnout, but none of them had to do with Larry's voice. "What are you gonna do?" Pete Karalekas asked us. "I've got a good feeling about this, though. I mean, I would do it again, maybe promote it more, but what are you gonna do? Tonight's Thursday, and Thursday night is a city night in Queens. On Thursday night, people in Queens go to the city." John Manown had another theory. "In Queens, on a Thursday night people come home at six o'clock, they kick off their shoes and have a TV dinner," he said. "Really. Now, if this were a Friday night the place would be swimming."

For the second set, Larry Holmes came out dressed in black. He raced through "How Sweet It Is" and "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," and announced that it was his intention to return to the ring. With that, he broke into an energetic rendition of "I'm Back." It was a complete switch from the first few songs he had sung; he was like a new former-world-champion-heavyweight singer. By the time he ripped into a thirty-minute rendition of "Stand By Me," all two dozen members of the audience were on their feet. At one point, Larry waded into the crowd with his microphone. Jimmy Leavy sang a chorus for him, Linda Simone sang a chorus, and George Simone mumbled some words into the mike after Larry leaned over and whispered the words into his ear. John Manown went right up to Larry and videotaped his dancing feet, and then stepped back to pan the audience. And at that moment Chris Karalekas got up onstage and danced a duet with Larry. Everyone—especially Larry, whose voice was by now hoarse and weaving in and out of various keys—was having a great time.

When it was all over, Larry gave some autographs, chatted about his repertoire ("I don't just sing," he said. "I sing songs that have some meaning to them"), and took the liberty of rating his performance a perfect ten. Larry and the guys in Marmalade had a long ride back to Larry's home, in Easton, Pennsylvania, so the Karalekas brothers suggested that they head over to the Neptune Diner for some coffee and some pie. Meanwhile, though the evening might have been a loss on the books, the Karalekases all seemed pleased—especially Chris, who was still reeling after his big dance. "Obviously, it was rather electrifying," he said. "And in a crazy way it was like a dream come true. It was like being in the ring with a former world champion. You know, I have a beautiful wife and a beautiful daughter, and I get a lot of levity out of life, and in sports there is a lot of money running around. But when I was up there he really touched me as a human being. Really."



*"The way I see it, we lived like pigs in the eighties and, with any luck, we'll continue to live like pigs throughout the nineties."*

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## *Moonrocks*

IF America had both an attic and a mother, and if in the course of cleaning out the attic the mother came across some boxes containing two-fifths of a ton of rocks and dirt, she would probably throw them away. And America would probably be quite upset when it found out, because the rocks and dirt in those boxes would be the samples gathered from the surface of the moon on six separate occasions between July, 1969, and December, 1972. Most people hardly ever think about the moonrocks anymore. But every once in a while something (the moon? some rocks?) will remind them. Recently, this happened to us. All of a sudden, without warning, we began to wonder about America's lunar samples. Specifically, we began to wonder if any of them were in New York.

In the course of making a few telephone calls to officials of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, we discovered the following: Of a total of eight hundred and forty-two pounds of lunar material that was collected during Project Apollo, six hundred and sixteen pounds is still being maintained in what NASA calls "pristine" condition on the second floor of the Lunar Sample Building, at NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, in Houston. These samples are stored in nitrogen-filled cabinets inside a vault that is made of reinforced concrete and lined with welded-steel plates. The vault is designed to withstand tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, and robbers. (If someone broke into the building and attempted to steal the moonrocks, all the openings into the vault would automatically close.) A hundred and fifteen pounds of pristine material is stored at Brooks Air Force Base, in San Antonio. Fifty-nine pounds of non-pristine material—mainly lunar samples that have been studied by scientists and returned to NASA—is kept in a separate vault, also robber-proof, in the Lunar Sample Building. (Pristine and non-pristine samples are never allowed to mix.) Sixteen pounds of lunar material has been "consumed" during experiments and in the preparation of samples. Fifteen pounds is still being studied by scientists. Twenty-one pounds is scattered around the world in the form of educational and commemorative displays. Of all unconsumed American lunar material that is neither stored in a facility belonging to NASA or the Air Force nor dispersed abroad, roughly three per cent, or slightly more than a pound, is in New York. Approximately four-fifths of this pound-plus is on display at the American Museum of Natural History. The rest—a single sample, weighing two-ninths of a pound—is at the United States Mission to the United Nations.

After we got off the telephone, we went up to the Museum of Natural History to take a look. We found the moonrocks in the Arthur Ross Hall of Meteorites. The samples—there are three of them—are embedded in blocks of clear plastic, which stand on gray pedestals in front of a blurry twelve-foot-tall black-and-white photograph of the far side of the moon. The samples are illuminated from below. Each one is gray, has an irregular shape, and measures a couple of inches across. The first two samples look like pieces of sidewalk. The third sample looks like a piece of sidewalk on which a thick glob of bubbly gray paint has been spilled.

We stood near the moonrocks for about half an hour, trying to gauge the scope of their appeal. Not many people stopped to look at them. The few who did stop all seemed to be speakers of foreign languages. During a slow period, we stared very closely at the display and saw many tiny contaminants embedded in the plastic along with the rocks: bits of dust, tiny threads, a short gray hairlike thing, and a small tubular object that looked to us like some sort of prehistoric insect, crustacean, or feather. A large group of schoolchildren thundered into the Hall of Meteorites, momentarily raising our hopes, but they thundered right past the moonrocks and into the adjoining Harry Frank Guggenheim Hall of Minerals and Gems. A little later, we went into the Hall of Minerals, too, and discovered the secret of its popularity. The minerals, which come from our own earth and include petrified tree trunks and gold nuggets the size of candy bars, are bigger, shinier, smoother, more mysterious, and better displayed than the moonrocks.

After we left the museum, we went back to our office and called the United States Mission to ask when we could drop by to see its moonrock. The person who took our call said that he knew nothing about any moonrock, and we ought to speak to someone in the press office. The person we spoke to in the press office said, "Oh, really?" Then she told us that she was going to refer our call to someone else. When we asked this new person if what NASA had told us was true, he said, "Not that I know of." Then, after a long silent interval, during which we were unable to think of any other questions, he said, sharply, "No, I am quite certain that it is not."

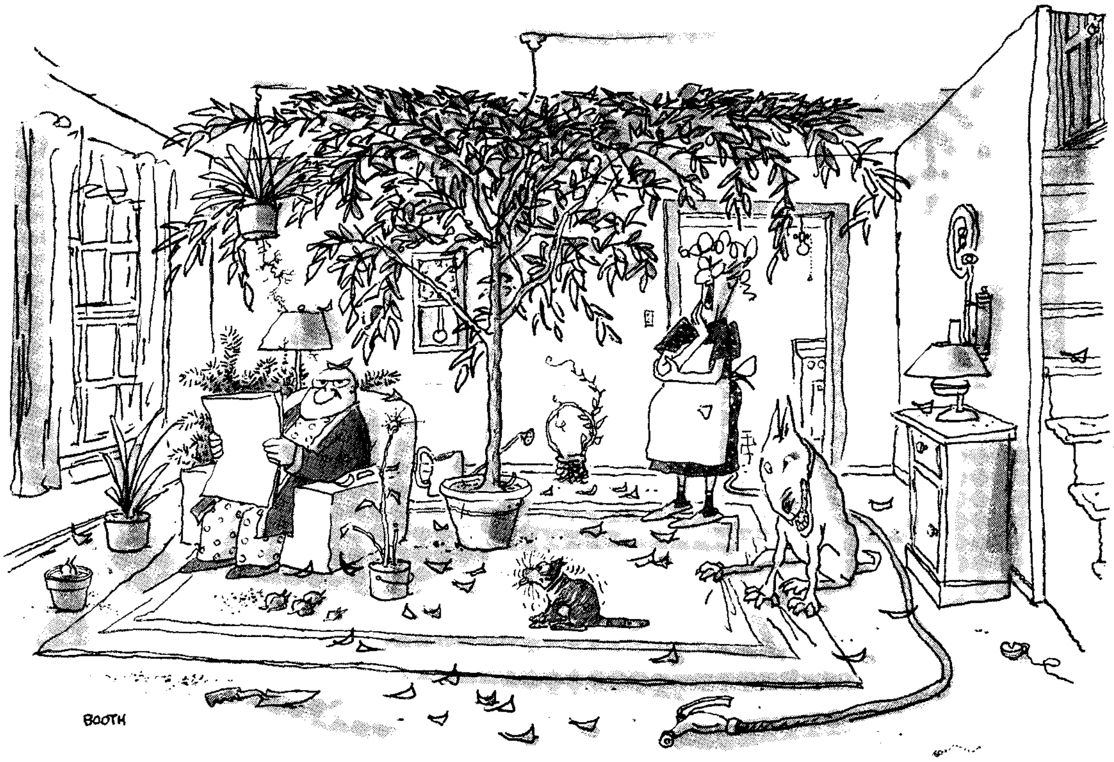
We drummed our fingers on our desk, then took a taxi to United Nations Plaza. The United States Mission is made of concrete and glass, and looks like a midget skyscraper. We bounded up the tiny front steps and into a cramped reception area, and were stopped by two uniformed guards. We told the guards that we had come to see the moonrock. One of them looked at us with suspicion. The other laughed and told us, in effect, to get lost.

At this point, we almost began to stop caring about the United States Mission's moonrock. We went back outside and walked around for half an hour. Then, suddenly, we had an idea. We went back to our office again and called the Museum of Natural History. After explaining what we wanted, we were connected with Martin Prinz, the curator of meteorites.

"Well, there is a lunar sample at the United Nations," Mr. Prinz said. [illegible] turned out that NASA lent a lunar sample to United States Mission in 1970, and the Mission gave the sample to the United Nations. NASA later took that sample back and replaced it with a new one. This new sample is on display in the entrance to the General Assembly Building. "It's quite small," Mr. Prinz told us. "Like our other samples, it's embedded in plastic. The reason for that is that all rocks will

*"We've been trying on religion to see if it fits, and it does."*

eventually crumble a little bit, and what do you do with the crumbs?"



*"That tree doesn't belong in this room."*

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## *Star Vehicles*

NOT many people think of the Danbury branch of the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles as swanky, but, like Sardi's or the Brown Derby, the state government's automotive bureau on Tamarack Avenue in Danbury is sprinkled with stardust. On the pine-panelled wall behind the counter where people line up to renew their car registrations or drivers' licenses are six framed and signed photographs of celebrities, and each one expresses the star's affection for the D.M.V. Dustin Hoffman doodled a romantic heart beside his signature. The rock-and-roll star Meat Loaf urged, "To Danbury Motor Vehicles: Rock on." Jack Gilford declared his sentiments with understatement: "To the DMV—Best Wishes." The most creative inscription is on James Taylor's picture. It starts at the top, runs down the right side, and finishes upside down on the bottom, and it says, "From James Taylor to the CT. Mo. Veh. Inspector(s). Way to look 'em over, guys."

The gallery of portraits began in 1987, when Dustin Hoffman's registration expired. A few weeks after it was renewed, Judith Corbett, the Danbury branch manager, received a publicity shot of Mr. Hoffman signed in black marking pen, as thanks for good service. Miss Corbett framed the picture and put it on the wall above the water fountain outside her office. A few months later, she spotted Jack Gilford waiting in line, swaddled in a coat and hat (it was raining hard that day), and she asked him to send a photo to go alongside Mr. Hoffman's. The wall of fame was inaugurated. Michael Zaslow, who played Roger Thorpe in television's "Guiding Light," followed a most gratifying visit to the D.M.V. with an eight-by-ten glossy that said, "Many thanks to Judy and the crew." Then Bongo, a local clown, bought a clown car and had it inspected, and afterward he asked if he could send a photograph, too. He submitted one that showed him sitting in the vehicle—a gaily painted delivery van—and signed it "To Judy, Bongo '87."

Not all the celebrities on the wall have actually made an appearance in the Danbury office. "As far as I know, Meat Ball has never been here," Miss Corbett told us the other day. Mr. Loaf's photograph was sent to the Danbury branch by the manager of the Norwalk Motor Vehicles office, which is where he registered his car, but which has no wall of celebrity pictures. One portrait—that of Gene Rayburn, the host of the "Match Game"—was added just recently. Miss Corbett explained that she'd had the photograph for several weeks but hadn't put it up until "frames went on sale."

Some celebrities who register their cars in Danbury do not send pictures. Miss Corbett feels she is a savvy judge of character, and knows which ones would be uncomfortable if they were asked to. Robert Vaughn has been in a few times. "Perfectly nice, but he just wants to be in and out," she said. Mia Farrow comes in "just like an everyday person, with her kids," and doesn't impress Miss Corbett as the type to send a picture. Nor does Miss Corbett expect to get a picture from Laura Branigan. When the singer came in a few weeks ago without suitable identification, Miss Corbett (who would have recognized her on sight) was otherwise engaged, and the inspector on duty said the only singers he knew were Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett. Miss Branigan was sent home to get proper identification.

Publicity picture or no publicity picture, a celebrity is not allowed to bring along a photographer or special lights to have a picture taken for a driver's license. Like everyone else, the celebrity has to sit in front of the Polaroid camera and risk looking awful. When the license is ready, an employee who is respectful of celebrities' desire for anonymity will walk out to the waiting area and hand it to the celebrity rather than call out the celebrity's name for everyone to hear, but that is the only special treatment a celebrity gets. For Judy Corbett, that's the point of having the pictures on the wall. "The everyday person looks at the celebrities and wants to know, 'Did Jack Gilford have to wait in line, too? Did Bongo wait?' " she says. "And we say yes, everybody waits in line at the D.M.V."

# WALTZ TIME

OH, the *Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaftsball!* What a glittering whirl that had been—a whole steamship erected in the ballroom, complete with real water, hanky-panky in the lifeboats, and a waltz orchestra rotating on the giant paddles—according to Mitzi, anyway, whose kind husband hadn't thought twice about escorting her, not to mention forking out for the ticket, unlike her own who had said, "Pfuh! That kind of claptrap isn't fit for a bunch of boulevardiers," and had gone out drinking and eating sausages with his tiresome cronies, leaving her at home in her boudoir reading Heine: a funny poem about a man giving pea soup to his darling and a sad one ending "When we love we die." Or the Bakers' Ball: quite a spree, too (said Mitzi)—real countesses dressed as croissants and seeded rye, mingling with sweaty bakery assistants. Or the Undertakers' Ball, with actual coffins. But now the pre-Lent season was almost over, and the only ball she'd managed to persuade her husband to attend was the one for members of the Lars Porsena Club, the exclusive thingummy he'd joined at his military college—a much staider affair.

Which they are at now. She is leaning against an anteroom wall, by the small square window that casts such an interesting light on her face—she presumes—next to the neoclassical urn filled with gladioli (? daffodils? asters? she was never much good at telling flowers apart), which will quite possibly induce her hay fever again. She sniffs, relishing the self-pity. And as for her husband (whom she still thinks of by his surname, Bedl, for all that they've been married five years) and Mitzi's husband, Dratfisch, and their little chum, Glibli . . . The three grown men are shuffling in a clump on the Persian carpet, swapping schoolboy jokes, addressing each other by the secret Club names (her husband is Brutus, Dratfisch is Hannibal, Glibli Caligula), simply refusing to dance, and, what's more, completely upstaging her own subtle lavender-and-mauve silk creation, which is actually quite fetching—though she did have to get the seamstress to add a little hip padding; it's shocking how thin she's getting these days, practically gaunt, not at all the chubby girl she was on her wedding day—in comparison to their sky-blue Hussar's uniforms and jangling spurs. She eyes them malevolently: willing Glibli to choke on his vast mustache and Dratfisch to trip over his big boots and her own husband to turn and look at her and sense her desires. When Bedl had first courted her, he'd been—well, not exactly dashing but at least an interesting sort of captain, and now he's turned into a colonel, as they do; they all do. What's the collective noun for colonels? A weariness of colonels. A boredom of colonels. An irrelevance of colonels.

Sometimes she thinks she should get a lover. Mitzi recommends this course: all the classier ladies have one, she maintains, and husbands are really quite pleased not to have to bother with that side of things, though they may posture for a while, claiming otherwise, and go red in the face. Mitzi's own husband, Dratfisch, is by now reconciled to her unfaithfulness, says Mitzi. It's funny, mind you: Mitzi had gone on and on about the handsomeness and virility of her lover, and then he'd turned out to be this quite sweet but very timid medical student with a brown mustache. No, if she herself were ever going to take a lover—and she said *if*—he would have to be some fabulous epitome of manhood who would literally sweep her off her feet.

Now the conversation of the colonels is drifting across to her. (Either they're talking louder or the music is quieter.) They're discussing—wouldn't you just believe it? . . . during a ball . . . *men!*—politics. "Macedonia," says Bedl. "Mark my words, Macedonia will be the flash point." "Bulgaria has designs on it," says Glibli. "If Servia invades Macedonia, Caligula," says Dratfisch. "And Greece will be drawn into the conflict, Hannibal," says Bedl. "And the Turks won't stand idly by, Brutus," says Dratfisch. Then Glibli shouts, "Don't forget Bulgaria!" He yells, "Bulgaria!" a few more times, guffawing as if it were the best joke in the world.

Then they tell real jokes—the usual ones. For example, they refer to the Emperor—who is officially designated as Royal and Imperial, which is abbreviated to *Ka & Ka*, which is reduced to a childish swearword. Which is shrieked by Glibli: the colonels smack their thighs and wobble with laughter till their spurs shake like tambourines, though they must have heard this pun a thousand times before. Then Dratfisch tells an anecdote about a lady—a duchess—suffering from syphilis, whose treatment consists of swallowing liquid mercury. "So there she is at the ball, waltzing to the music, tra la la, la la, la la, la la, when her partner, the Emperor, he says to her, he says—" Dratfisch bursts into choking belly laughs, unable to speak. Bedl bangs him on the back until he continues. " . . . He says, 'I say, Madam, you've just dropped your—' See, what happens, the mercury goes right through the system and comes out the other end—'I say, Madam, your pearls are on the floor!' And the Emperor bends down on hands and knees and tries to scoop them up!"

Then the colonels almost topple with laughter and lean on each other for mutual support, blurting the secret names. "Brutus!" "Hannibal!" "Caligula!"

She shuts her eyes. The smell seems to intensify: the flowers, and her own perfume, Nuit de Marienbad, and the floor polish, and the odor of champagne. And the music, too: a desperate, driving waltz rhythm; even her breath, even her heartbeat, is coming in six-eight time. How can anyone resist the desire to dance?

And she is being tapped on the shoulder. Her husband's voice is saying, "Want to dance, eh?"

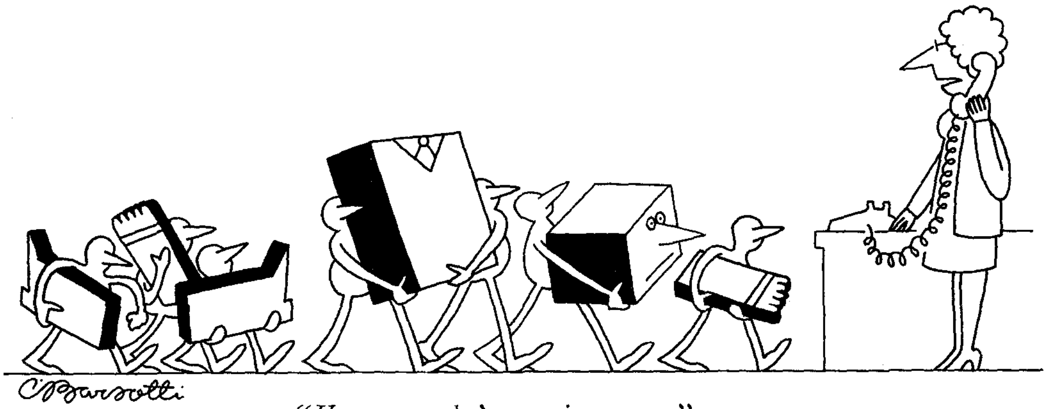
She opens her eyes. Her husband, her Bedl: a colonel in an absurd dress uniform like something out of an operetta, with his fluffy, graying side-whiskers and his damp lips. No, she can't bear to dance with him. She pats her hip, her belly, her pearl necklace, her forehead. "Not tonight dear. I have a . . . you know, 'headache.' "

He grunts. "Ah, yes. Woman's problem. Yes."

He backs away cautiously, in the direction of his chums, scared by the mystery of female physiology. He seems relieved to have been excused from his obligation to dance with her, after all.

And her explanation is not altogether untrue, she realizes. Her curse will start any day now. She can practically feel the thick blood battering its way out.

And, oh look, there's Mitzi, waving her fan at her. She doesn't really want to chatter with Mitzi—there's only so much one can say concerning the charms of Mitzi's real lover and her own hy-



*"Hang on, he's coming now."*

pothetical ones—but there's no getting out of it. Mitzi is approaching with a big man on her arm.

Mitzi kisses her effusively on both cheeks and introduces the new man, a Prussian major with a sabre scar on his cheek, who tightens his gloved hands into fists and doesn't say anything. He clicks his heels and bows.

Mitzi says, "Oh, I know you two will have so much in common."

Well, what is she to say to him? She tries "Are you fond of balls?" He grunts, "Hmf." She says, "Are there many grand balls in Prussia?" "Hmf." "They say Bismarck is very light on his feet?" "Hmf." Meanwhile, they have been walking into the ballroom proper. The polished floorboards and the chandelier and the medals on the gentlemen and the orchestral instruments blaze.

And there he is!

He is a man, a civilian, in immaculate black dress clothes. His hair is rather long and swept back. His huge eyes shine. He is at the far side of the dance floor, striding directly toward them.

Suddenly Mitzi becomes flustered. The Prussian disappears. All around this fabulous gentleman, dancers are sidling away, creating a vacuum about him, as if his very presence produced an unearthly radiation that pushes away mere mortals.

Without saying a word, he walks straight up to her and takes her by the arm.

Mitzi fiddles nervously with her fan. "Er, this is my cousin." For a second, she wonders if "cousin" is a euphemism, and Mitzi has been saving up this glory for herself—but surely not, for Mitzi would hardly have kept it a secret. "Your cousin," she says. "But why haven't you introduced him before?" Mitzi backs away. "I'll, er, leave you two together. I, er, must . . . "

This is not the first time in her life she has encountered the perfect man. Once, in high summer, boating along the Danube, she glimpsed, in passing, a back view of a man on the bank. She had to bite her tongue to stop herself crying out. Then the boat drifted downstream, and the man passed from her vision. Another time, midwinter, stepping down from her carriage near the cathedral, she saw footprints on the snow—the even marks of high-quality summer shoes. She had followed the tracks for half a kilometre . . . and then the footprints had vanished: the man had climbed into a carriage, perhaps, or ascended into the heavens. But now the perfect man stands before her, in the flesh.

He gazes directly into her eyes. And she into his. His irises are a bright green, flecked with amber—beautiful! "I know what you are thinking," he says in a clear, breathy voice. "I can see inside your mind." She says, "Yes. You are right." "My name is Rudolf," he says. "What is your name?" Imagine addressing a man by his forename on the first meeting! Imagine him addressing you by yours! She tells him all her names. He says, "Do you like waltz music?" "Yes! I adore it." "I have a Pianola in my head, so I can play any tune you want. What is your favorite?" She laughs; then he, looking slightly puzzled, laughs. "The 'Blue Danube,' please, Rudolf." He sings the melody quite badly, clashing with the music being played by the orchestra. Then he laughs more, and she laughs. He says, "My teeth are black and white, and they go up and down when I play." "Yes, yes, how droll." "Sometimes my Pianola plays voices too—the anarchists did it." "I don't understand, Rudolf." She has a sense of vertigo, as if the polished dance floor were slipping away from underneath her. She hangs on to his arm tighter. She tries to clear things up. "What anarchists? Is this a private joke?" He whispers, "The anarchists put a bomb in my head and I may blow up at any time!" He cackles with laughter. And then he pats her cheek gently, like a father soothing a crying child. "But don't worry, my darling, I won't let it explode you; I will make sure nothing harms you, ever. . . . Shall we dance?"

Now she realizes that this perfect man is mad—nothing more or less. He must have been let out of some asylum for a few hours, to take part in the ball. Everybody else must have realized this instantly, everybody except her. How she hates her own delusions; she wants the dance floor to open wide and swallow her up. And yet . . . Certainly she is a fool, a dreamer, but damn it if she is going to miss the chance to dance, once in her life, with the perfect man.

The two of them step out onto the floor. Now the orchestra plays the "Blue Danube." They glide to and fro in an easy waltz. He is indeed a splendid dancer: she feels she is stepping over clouds. All around them other couples swerve aside. She notices the shocked faces of soldiers and ladies; a duchess twists her head to avoid viewing the spectacle. Her husband and his chums are in the doorway, staring. Then the man begins to slip and slide, as if on board a ship in the middle of a storm—a sinking ship. He stamps nearer to the orchestra, then farther. He pushes her against other couples, he clutches her tightly against himself. He has her rampage with him in a huge swirling motion—she glimpses other couples panicking and dashing aside. Still the music plays on. Everybody else leaves the dance floor. She couldn't escape even if she wanted to: his grip is iron. She realizes she is laughing and sobbing in a kind of absurd joy as the two of them—she and the perfect man—waltz their mad waltz across the polished floor of a ballroom on the first floor of a palace in the middle of a city at the heart of an empire in the spring of that year. —JONATHAN TREITEL

# A DIFFERENT KIND OF IMPERFECTION

AND then it was Christmas vacation and he was home. "Welcome home, Alexander!" his mother said when he walked in the door, pressing her warm face against his cold one. She was the only person who used his full name. It sounded odd.

She had bought some flowers and arranged them around the house in the special way she had of making things seem nice and attended to. Having brought him up alone—his father had died when he was ten—his mother was diligent about respecting his privacy, not prying into his life. He always felt guilty about not wanting to tell her things about himself, the few times she asked. After all, he was her son, her only child, and his life would be of interest to her.

"So. Tell me about school," she said now, sitting across from him at the kitchen table. His bags were piled up behind him in the foyer, and he slouched in his chair, which felt too small for him. The whole house seemed oddly small in comparison with the high ceilings of the ancient dorm he lived in at Vassar, where he was now a sophomore.

The scene—his mother and himself in the same chairs, the same look on her face—reminded him of coming home from kindergarten and having his mother and his father ask him how school was, while they sat at the kitchen table. He had always shrugged and said nothing, but he sometimes wondered whether both of his parents had spent their entire day waiting for him at the kitchen table, discussing him. All that attention seemed to demand more from him than anything he could supply with meagre details about his fractions or his papier-mâché cow, so he usually said nothing. Eventually, he would shrug and slouch on into his room, down the long dark hallway. But he had always liked the idea that both his parents had been in conference over him all day.

Now here was his mother sitting in the same position at the kitchen table, smiling and asking him the same questions, looking loving and a little daunting, as usual. It was too much love to live up to.

"There's really nothing much to say," he answered, thinking about Sloan, his suddenly ex-girlfriend. She lived in Baltimore. He had never thought about that city, but now that Sloan lived there, was in fact there that very moment, Baltimore seemed like an alluring place. "I seem to be getting the hang of how to be a college student," he said. "It's not too difficult."

"And your studies?"

Alex winced at the word. "Studies" was too dignified for what he was doing. "Well, I'm not going to major in sociology. That's all I can say for sure."

"What's it like?" she asked.

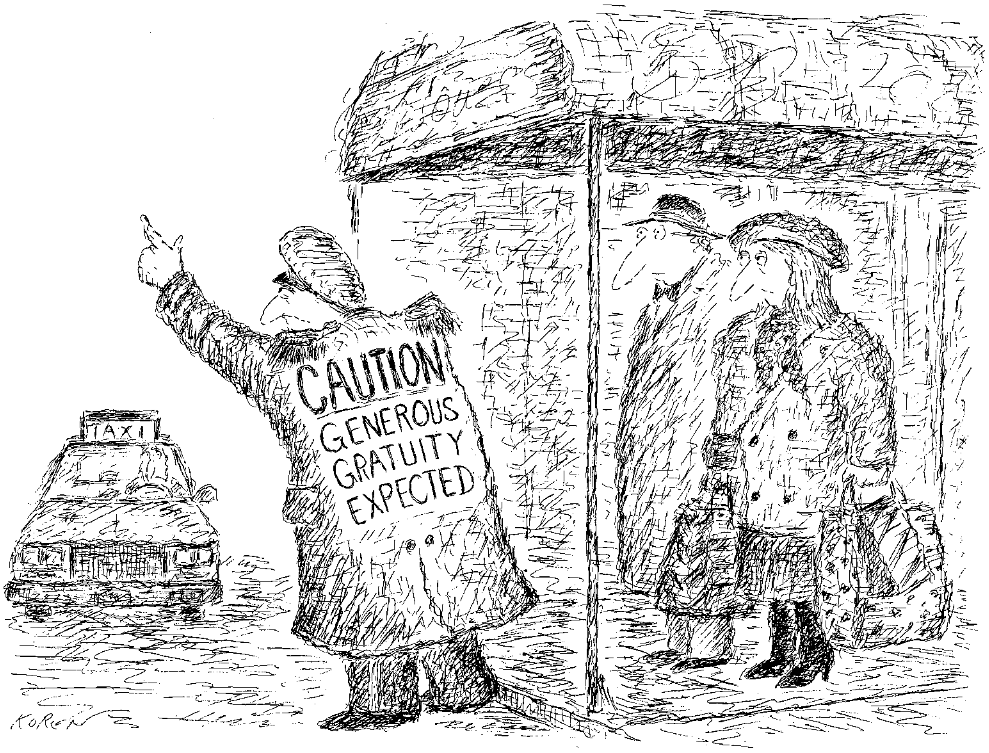
"The dorms are pretty nice, but at night the only place to get food is the candy machine." He paused for a moment. "The classes are good, though," he went on, thinking she would enjoy hearing that.

Sloan was the first girl he had really gone out with in college, and, by extension, the first girl he had really broken up with. She was a vegetarian poet who had her own place off campus, which seemed like a very daring move in sophomore year. Her apartment was just across the road, but the fact that it was technically off campus made it feel illicit. They had gone out together for a few months, but just before vacation Sloan informed him—or "reminded" him, as she pointed out—that she had another boyfriend at home. She told him that she felt she had to give that a chance. It was shaping up to be a miserable Christmas vacation, he thought.

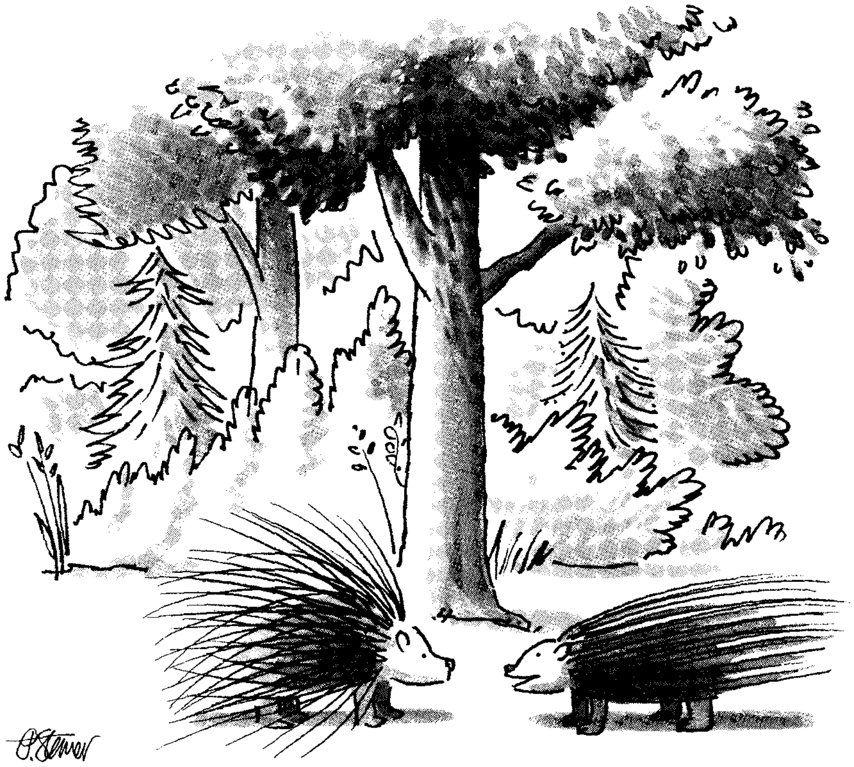
His mother cupped her face in her hands. Her chin rested on the heel of each palm, and her fingers were over her cheeks, framing her face. She was very pretty, and yet even her happiest expression always seemed to have a tinge of sadness. His father had died of cancer ten years earlier, and Alex couldn't remember whether this look of gravity had come into her face after that. Perhaps being happy always reminded her of her loss. She hadn't remarried. She hadn't even painted the apartment. Alex looked into her liquid eyes and smiled. Then he escaped down the hall.

His room seemed different. Freshman year, he had scurried down to New York from Poughkeepsie almost every chance he got, and his first Christmas vacation had seemed like a reprieve. His room had welcomed him. His mother had welcomed him. The whole house had burst into life, as if it had been in suspended animation since the day he left. Coming home this time was different; he couldn't get over how strange it felt to be back. His room was exactly as he had left it, but it just sat there, inanimate, waiting to be occupied by whoever came along.

He went out into the early-evening



light and walked over to a bar on Eighty-third and Amsterdam, the Jaunting Car. It was the last bar in his neighborhood with any charm, but today it was almost empty. He ordered a Scotch and looked at himself in the mirror behind the bar. One of the better things he had acquired since going to college was a taste for Scotch. Previously he had drunk only vodka, a habit he had formed at the age of fourteen when he had sampled all the bottles in his parents' liquor cabinet and had decided that vodka was the least unpleasant. His mother didn't drink, and hardly ever had guests, and it had sometimes occurred to him that the bottle of Wolfschmidt he was drinking from had probably been bought by his father. His first cigarette, which he had smoked at about the same age, had come from an ancient pack of Dunhills he had found in a table drawer, in among a collection of broken sunglasses frames, pipe cleaners, loose buttons, and other artifacts of his father's. It was an odd collection of items, the debris that comes together only because there isn't enough of any one thing to require its own drawer. When he came upon it, four years after his father died, the stash itself looked static, stunned with age. That cigarette, Alex recalled now, was rancid. The pack of Dunhills was probably still there. The drawer was always shut.



"*Still prickly, but smart. Styling gel makes the difference.*"

HE spent the first few days back from school mostly alone. He had stopped frantically trying to touch base with friends from high school the way he'd done at this time a year ago. He thought about Sloan, he walked around the streets at midday in the bright high winter sun, and spent hours meandering around his house examining shelves and closets he hadn't looked at in years. The apartment, with its cracked and peeling paint, its rickety wooden chairs with half-broken cane seats, was filled with books, among them many dark-green or maroon volumes with titles like "Textbook of Pathology," "Clinical Hematology," and a huge book with the ominous title "Heart." His father had been a doctor—a psychiatrist. Alex perused the bookshelves with a peculiar interest, as if he were looking for clues. One set of twenty-four books in pale-blue dust jackets took up an entire shelf: the complete works of Sigmund Freud. He took out "Totem and Taboo" and looked at the first chapter, "The Horror of Incest." He put the book back with the haste of someone who has opened the door of an occupied bathroom.

Scanning for a lighter topic, he took down "Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious." He opened to a random page and read, "It is remarkable how universally popular a smutty interchange of this kind is among the common people and how it unfailingly produces a cheerful mood."

He returned the book to its place, and listened to the silence of the house. He and his mother lived in an apartment building, but all their neighbors were quiet. While he was growing up, the only noisy person in the building had been himself—he had once bounced a rubber ball so incessantly that the downstairs neighbors had called the police. He then took to throwing water balloons out the window. He was so intrigued by the way the balloons shimmered—like Jell-O, he thought—in their flight that he always forgot to duck his head back in the window in time and soon he got caught. He and his mother were nearly evicted, she told him. Again and again, as he prowled around the house now, he was struck by the evidence of lives lived. It lay on the shelves, along the walls, stacked in piles on the floor.

ALEX's college roommate, Milo, called and announced that he was going to be in New York for an afternoon before he went skiing. They met in a coffee shop for lunch.

"You're bored," Milo said over a tuna-fish sandwich. "You should get out of New York. Come skiing with me."

"I don't ski," Alex said.

"Come for the scenery."

"There's plenty of scenery here. I can see a little sliver of the Hudson River and part of New Jersey from my window."

Milo gave Alex an appraising look. "Come for the women," he said. "This place is going to be crawling with women. You need a distraction."

"I am distracted," said Alex. "I need to concentrate."

"You're concentrating on your distraction," Milo said. A little piece of food had lodged itself at the corner of his mouth. This completely discredited him in Alex's mind. The guy couldn't swallow properly; he wasn't someone whose advice was going to be helpful.

"All right, all right," Milo went on. "You're concentrating on Sloan, which is depressing you. Tell you what—work on it, and when you've got it perfected give me a call." Then he neatly pinched the tuna speck from the corner of his mouth and flicked it at Alex.

"That was the problem with you and Sloan," he went on, with some satisfaction. "You were just an amateur at being depressed. Sloan was a pro. You couldn't keep up."

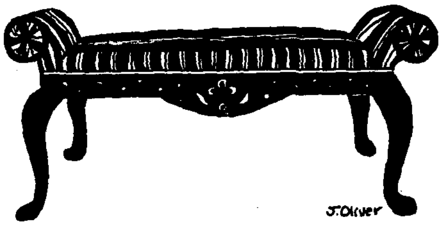
THE apartment's foreignness had begun to wear off, giving way to something even more disturbing. It was familiarity, but not the kind that makes things disappear into the background. Now every detail jumped out and announced itself as significant, the way banal things became conspicuous whenever there were guests in the apartment. Alex was his own guest now, he decided, a sightseer in his own home.

He began to realize that his apartment was submerged in books—hundreds and hundreds of them, in the corner bookshelf, on the bookshelf against the wall, or stacked in dusty heaps in a corner, spilling over everywhere. He noticed that some of the books held slivers of paper, which projected above the tops of the pages. He opened one such book and discovered faded pencil underlinings on each of the marked pages, with a word or two of comment here and there in the margin. Alex didn't know much about his father's intellectual life, but he had lately noticed that his father's haphazard handwriting bore a conspicuous resemblance to his own. He examined the pages more carefully, and the marginal notes seemed to confirm it. He went from book to book and eventually stopped at one and began to read. It was "To The Lighthouse," by Virginia Woolf—a book he'd never read.

The volume itself was old; its gray cloth cover was tattered at the corners, but the binding remained stiff and dignified. The pages were only slightly yellow and had a certain weight to them. The book had been published in 1927, five years after his father was born.

When had his father read it? He had arrived in America as a teen-ager sometime before the Second World War. So if his father had read this in college it would have been the early nineteen-forties, and he would have been almost the same age as Alex was now, reading the same pages. But there was the possibility that his father read the book years later. Maybe even after Alex was born. There were no marks to indicate which, one way or another.

He read on, turning each page in anticipation of another one of his father's marks. On page 99, a strand of pencil underlined a fragment of a sentence: " . . . she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness." It was not a line that would have jumped out at Alex, but seeing it underlined by his father disturbed him and moved him. The words "exquisite happiness, intense happiness" resonated above the whispery pencil mark that flowed underneath them. Alex stared at the pencil lines for a moment, as if they were completely separated from the writing. He was waiting for the lines to reveal something. The pencil was neither sharp nor dull. The lines didn't seem to have been drawn with a great deal of pressure, but they weren't too light, either. Had they been made in bed, or at a desk, or in an armchair—or on a bus? He felt a pang of frustration, trying to imagine what his father had been thinking. It was a sharp twinge that made him shudder for a moment.



HE was in the kitchen one afternoon, staring into the refrigerator, when his mother came in and sat down at the table expectantly, as if she wanted to have a conversation. He obliged, sitting down across from her.

She smiled, tilted her head a little, and said, "What are you thinking?"

"Nothing," he said. He wanted to say more but he couldn't. It was always this way with his mother—the unwilling retreat.

"You have been walking around with a funny expression, as if something were bothering you."

"Nothing is bothering me. It's just odd to be back. You know, like, when you go away and then come back and it's, like—"

"Stop saying 'like.' "

"It's weird, then."

"I can tell something is on your mind. You have this cloudy look about you. I've been wanting to bring it up for some time now."

"I've only been home for three days."

"But before, even. I've been worried about you." His mother had the rare but unmistakable expression she got when she was preparing to try to exert authority. She wasn't the authoritarian type, but in the absence of his father

## RECONCILIATION

Late, the time of humble reconciliation
With himself arrived for him.
"Yes"—he said—"I was created
To be a poet and nothing more.
I did not know anything else to do,
Greatly ashamed but unable to change my fate."

The poet: one who constantly thinks of something else.
His absent-mindedness drives his people to despair.
Maybe he does not even have any human feelings.

But, after all, why should it not be so?
In human diversity a mutation, variation
Is also needed. Let us visit the poet
In his little house in a somewhat faded suburb,
Where he raises rabbits, prepares vodka with herbs,
And records on tape his hermetic verses.

—CZESLAW MILOSZ

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

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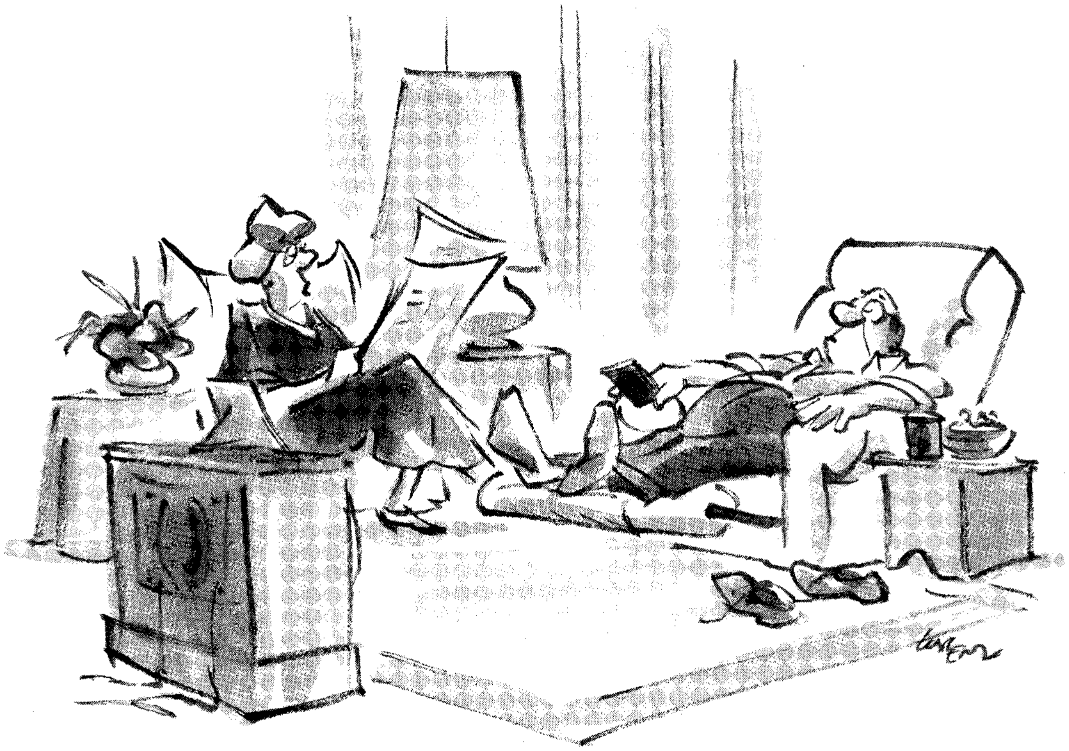
she had to take the offensive periodically.

"You seem very unfocussed," she said. "As if you're drifting. There is a certain urgency lacking."

"What's there to be urgent about, Mom? It's Christmas vacation."

She looked at him some more, with her hazel eyes, which sometimes turned green. Her affection was discomforting, though he had never been without it, or even considered that he might ever be. He felt his cheeks warm up, and watched the corners of her mouth slowly turn into a bittersweet smile, as if she were seeing something that had not yet come into view for him.



*"I see here that the universe is now thought to be full of inexplicably dense clumps."*

ANOTHER passage read: "He knew, of course he knew, that she loved him. He could not deny it. And smiling she looked out of the window and said (thinking to herself, Nothing on earth can equal this happiness)—" A dried piece of scraggly orangish paper—a ripped strip of it—had stuck out of the top of the book like a buoy in a channel, and when he got to it he found those words underlined in pencil.

He took out the shred of paper and examined it. He was sitting on the floor in a dusty corner of the study, next to a ragged brown armchair. It was a shred, all right—one of several torn up and placed, perhaps, in a pile, so they could be used over the course of a reading session. This shred was the first of several sprouting up from the top of the book, a grove of markers densely clustered in an area where his father seemed to have found interesting material.

The next marked page contained just one underlined sentence: "It's almost too dark to see." Very enigmatic observation, thought Alex.

Some lines were neatly drawn, but most had been made casually, almost sloppily, though they never ran over the words. They wavered. It was hard for him to gauge how much the pencil marks had faded over time.

The whole issue of time and dates bothered him. How old had his father been when he made these marks? Alex wanted to know. Another underlined segment he came across was itself in quotes and read: " 'And all the lives we ever lived/And all the lives to be,/Are full of trees and changing leaves.' " How old would the man be who had marked that?

ALEX walked around his neighborhood in the daytime, looking at people passing, and wondering why they weren't at work. No one in the middle of the day in a residential neighborhood was in a rush, he realized. He scrutinized faces, searching for the anxiety of lateness, but only found people drifting in or out of hardware stores, clothing stores, the corner market. What was their excuse? He had his and it comforted him: he was a student. Such an easy excuse—he wondered how long it would last. At this rate, he thought, an eternity.

He imagined calling Sloan. "I've discovered peeling paint on all the walls and I've walked around the apartment pulling pieces off the ceiling so it won't look as bad," he would say. "The house hasn't been painted since three years before my dad died."

"Maybe you should get the place painted," she would say. She was annoyingly pragmatic when she wanted to keep a distance between them.

"I thought maybe you weren't having a good time with what's-his-name and wanted to come up to New York," he would say. He imagined what she would say to a question like that. He decided he wouldn't want to hear it.

AMID a battalion of small photographs set up on his mother's bedroom bureau there was a small snapshot of his parents. His father and mother were extremely good-looking—particularly his mother, who had high, sharp cheekbones and thin lips, and wore her brown hair in a bun. Her family was from Berlin; her grandfather had been an enormously wealthy banker who shot himself just after the First World War, when he had lost all his money. Alex liked that detail of his family history; the combination of death and money had a certain glamour for him.

His father had been born in Vienna. He was handsome in the photograph, with dark hair and deep grooves in his face, particularly in the forehead. He had a certain monkey quality to him. The picture was a head-and-shoulders shot of the two of them, dressed up nicely, with their shoulders squared to the camera but with their heads turned a little toward each other, each of them gazing at the other's face. His mother looked stunning. She was wearing a black dress that contrasted sharply with the string of pearls around her neck; her smooth skin caught the light and glowed. His father was merely handsome in comparison, and his smile suggested that he felt gleeful at his good luck. But they shared a conspiratorial look, glimmering with hidden knowledge. Was it the secret of beauty? Was it the secret of happiness? Alex imagined the moment as intense.

The picture was small, no more than two inches square. She liked antique things, small things—frames and cameos in particular. The family history had a nineteenth-century ambience, completed by ornate silver embellishments and delicate wood carvings around the frames. The frames were precious, personal. He rarely saw them, though. Because of the sharp rays of the morning sun that flooded his mother's window, the pictures were all turned to face the wall. She had never managed to put up any blinds.

That the sun was fading her photos was a discovery his mother had made somewhat late in the game, and most of the pictures had already lost a good deal of clarity, as if they were undergoing the development process in reverse. In one, he himself was walking on unsteady legs across the grass. He was chubby-cheeked but had a look of great purpose. But the photograph was now nearly a mirage; it had faded so badly.

His parent's good looks interested him, but not as much as their shared expression in the small picture. They had recently married. That was for sure. His father was rugged and dark, and wise-looking, with his lined face. His mother looked like a goddess. Her eyes and his seared into each other's with deep meaning. Or was it just lust?

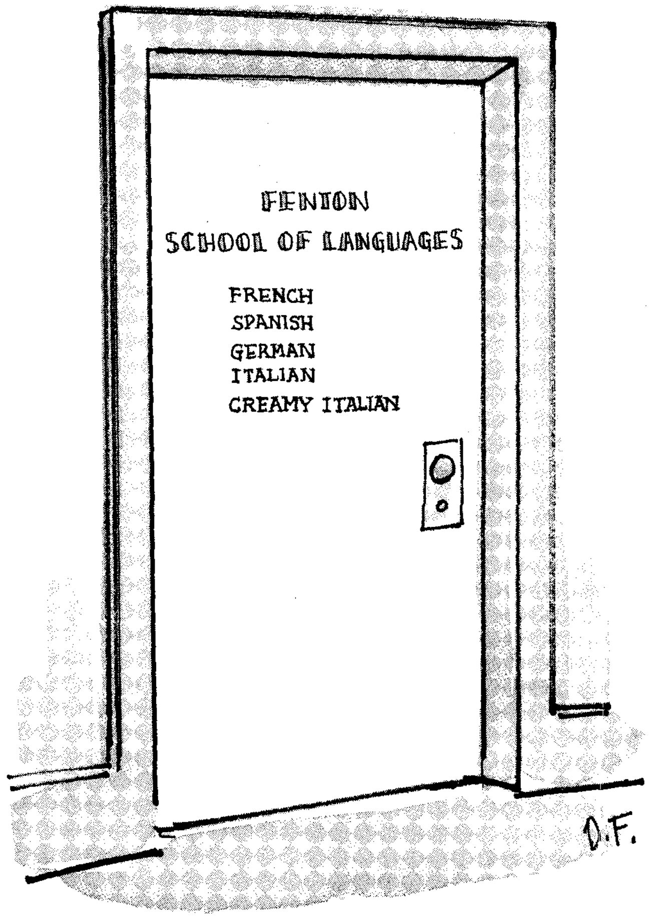
"EXQUISITE happiness, intense happiness." He looked at the words and the scrawny pencil lines underneath them. The underlining was no more or less emphatic than elsewhere, but he still stared at it, trying to infer something more. When did his father read this? When did he make these marks? What was the proximity of the time of these marks to that of the small picture? To all the pictures? The day Alex had gone to the bureau and, in a rout of the established order, about-faced the whole group of photographs so he could look at them together, it had dawned on him that all the photographs of his father were taken when he was an adult. He had reached a watershed in life that Alex had yet to get near. He had the look of a man whose twenties had never taken place, or, if they had, were somehow lost. Where had his father been when he was twenty? What secrets had he learned between twenty and the time of the picture? What prompted him to underline those words? What had he figured out?

An impossibility, an immovable wall lay between Alex and the answer. He felt the strain of permanence in the situation and in everything that reminded him of it: the remaining cigarettes, the same paint on the walls, the stain on the headboard on his father's side of the bed. There was a secret in them which had clearly been lost. Gone down, away. It had descended beneath an impenetrable surface. Alex could only run his hands over it, searching for a subtle suggestion, a different kind of imperfection. He didn't feel sentimental about it. Just frustrated, like an archeologist who has hit bedrock—no farther to dig. No more options. Except, perhaps, one. He decided to move laterally.

He began to scavenge the house for things obsolete, unexpected. He took the pack of old, yellowed cigarettes and marched out into the day with it. Broadway glistened in the stunning white light of noon. It had been remarkably clear weather since he got back. Walking down the street with an ancient and unlit cigarette between his fingers, it occurred to him that he wasn't depressed at all. If anything, he was buoyant. He had this thing, this business about his father and the secrets of his happiness, that he couldn't figure out. The challenge was dredging him up out of his self-pity over Sloan, and he took this to be a good sign.

He wasn't depressed—he was merely mystified. He was looking for something between the lines. Enjoying this new state, he lit the cigarette and took a few lung-scorching puffs. Awful. He held the cigarette between his thumb and index finger, felt its warmth. He liked it in his hand. It was his father's cigarette—one of the last few in the pack that he had never had a chance to smoke. They'd been stranded.

ALEX went on reading "To the Lighthouse" with a dual diligence. He was watching for his father's markings, but at the same time the book had caught him in its rhythm, like a boat that rocks subtly, and whose rocking sensation persists even after its passengers have

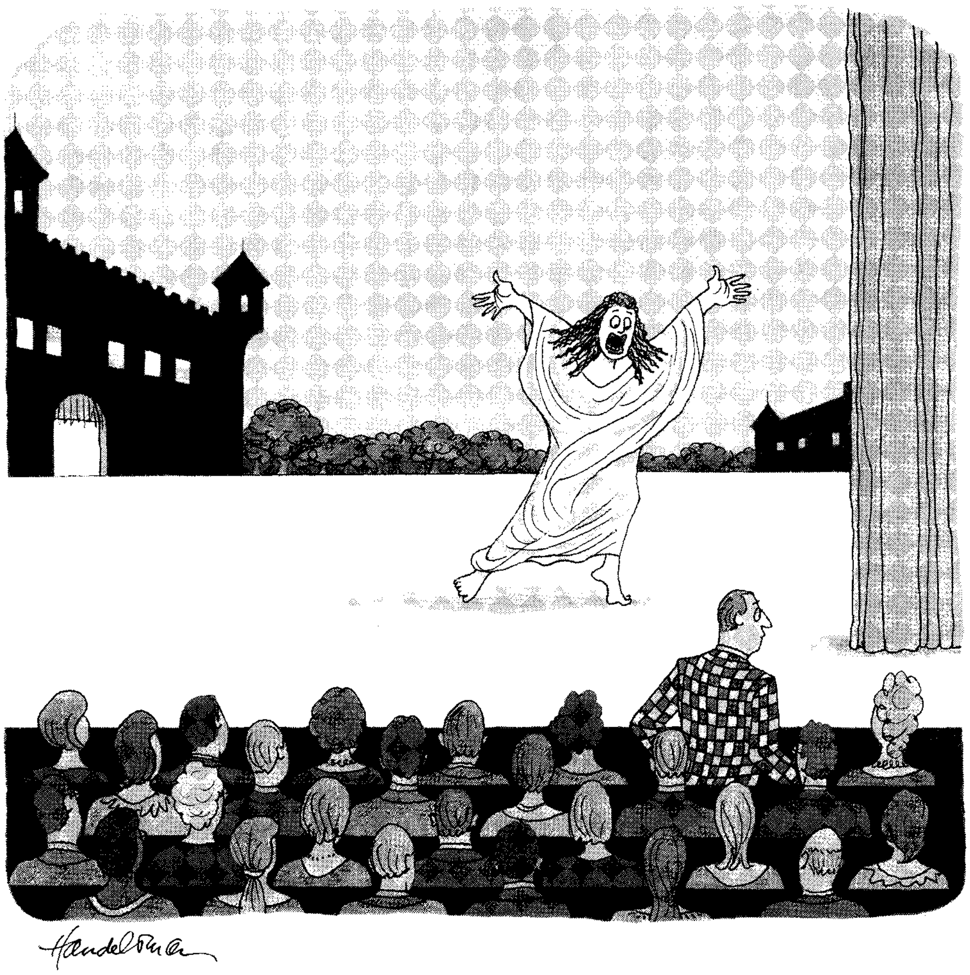


disembarked. Then, as he turned page 193, he made a startling discovery. Between the next two pages he found a business card. Clearly meant to be a marker, it had slipped down, so it hadn't been visible. The card was yellowed, and on it was his father's name, "Solomon Fader, M.D." In the lower right-hand corner was his father's office address and telephone number, with the exchange spelled out: "Trafalgar 9-3072." Alex picked up the card and turned it over in his hand for a moment before realizing the significance of the find. His father had been at that office for only the last nine years of his life. This meant that he had probably known he was dying as he read "To the Lighthouse," for his illness, Alex knew, had lasted more than eight years.

Alex suddenly thought about a spring walk in Central Park that his mother had once told him about. The day was warm and sunny, and his parents had gone out for a stroll at lunchtime. Things were going well for them, by any standard. Except that during that particular walk the man in the picture told his wife that he was dying, and things were no longer going well. By any standard. The words "She had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness" sprang to Alex's mind again. Then came the image in the photograph—that secret but happy gaze his parents shared.

Did his father read the book just before he found out he was dying of cancer, when things had been going so well? When he had a career and a wife and a baby boy—or just after, when all such perceptions would be influenced by this new knowledge? Or had dying caused some kind of purified state of emotion, something that heightened everything? Was imminent death a magnifying glass through which the heat of life was intensified—enlarged and sharpened into a prism-point of misery or joy?

He went out again and walked down the street, preoccupied with his thoughts. His gaze was fixed on the pavement in front of him. Then he lifted his head and saw his mother just down the block. She was holding a plastic grocery bag, but it was a light load, probably only a carton of milk, maybe some oranges, some bread. His mother, when not in a celebratory mood, lived frugally.



*Lucia is further maddened by the early departure of a subscriber in a sports jacket.*

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But it was her expression that stopped him. She, too, was engrossed in something and had her head down as she scrutinized the ground in front of her. Her face looked concerned, even old, and it struck him that his mother was aging. Not that the idea was such a shock, but it jarred him to see how different the face he was looking at just then was from the taut, angular, smooth-skinned face that looked so coolly into the smiling monkeyface of his father, in the photograph. This face—her face now—wore an expression of mild confusion, as if she were trying to remember where she had left her keys.

He stood still as she approached him on a direct collision course. She was oblivious. The face that had so often warmed his looked a little gray. It came nearer, a visage, and only when she was five or ten feet away did she look up abruptly, as if she had noticed his shoes standing still on the pavement. Alex had been smiling as she came nearer, and he was looking forward to the prospect of surprising her. But when she suddenly looked up she had such an expression of alarm and shock that he felt his own face freeze. Her expression was completely unfamiliar. She was wholly surprised, off guard. Her mouth was slightly ajar, her eyes wide, her face a little slack around the edges. She blinked a moment, composing herself, registering that this was her son in front of her, and then started to smile.

But it was too late; he was upon her, hugging her. Something had come over him at the sight of her disorientation, and he had leaped forward to embrace her, as if he were catching her in mid-fall. The leap was urgent—desperate, even—and when he got to her he put his arms around her and squeezed her tightly to his chest, as if he were afraid that she might drop something or lose something, or as if some secret that only she knew would slip away.

—THOMAS BELLER

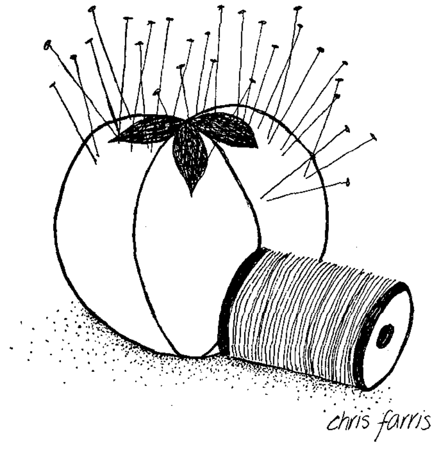
# ANNALS OF THE COLD WAR

## THE YELLOW-RAIN COMPLEX—I

ON June 1st of last year, during a summit meeting in Washington, Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev signed an agreement that provides for the progressive destruction of the great bulk of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons currently held by the United States and the Soviet Union. Under its terms, fifty per cent of the declared stocks of such weapons are to be destroyed by the end of 1999, and by 2002 the remaining stocks are to be reduced, on each side, to five thousand tons of chemical agents. The agreement has cleared the way for the imposition of a global ban on the possession of such weapons—a ban similar to the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which forbids the production or stockpiling of biological weapons. Negotiations are under way, at the forty-nation, United Nations-sponsored Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, on the draft of such a convention, and if all goes well it could be ready for signing as early as the beginning of next year.

Even if the convention is satisfactorily drawn up, however, it has to be subscribed to, ratified, and adhered to in practice in order to be effective. There are formidable difficulties to be overcome. Some twenty countries are thought to have developed chemical weapons, though the number of nations possessing substantial stockpiles—the United States and the Soviet Union being at the head of the list—is considerably smaller, probably less than ten. Most of the countries now believed to have chemical weapons or to be actively developing them are in the Third World. Foremost among them, of course, is Iraq. In its eight-year war with Iran, Iraq employed mustard gas and nerve gas against Iranian troops, and in March, 1988, carried out horrifyingly cruel mustard-gas attacks upon members of its own Kurdish minority, notably in the town of Halabja, about a hundred and fifty miles northeast of Baghdad, where five thousand men, women, and children were blistered, burned, and asphyxiated. Last April, Saddam Hussein, Iraq's President, warned that in the event of an Israeli attack on his country he would retaliate with chemical weapons and "make the fire eat up half of Israel." American and allied troops stationed in Saudi Arabia have been equipped with gas masks and anti-gas suits, which it is hoped will protect them from any Iraqi mustard- or nerve-gas attacks. Iraq has conducted almost nightly bombardments of cities in Israel and Saudi Arabia since the first days of the war in the Gulf. The bombardment has caused—so far—relatively limited damage, but it has aroused fierce anxiety in the targeted populations, because of the possibility that the incoming warheads might be armed with chemical or even biological agents. General Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, informed reporters at a Pentagon briefing a week after the allied bombing of Iraq began that while considerable damage had been done to Iraq's chemical- and biological-weapons facilities the Iraqis had already "dispersed a lot of that chemical-weapon capability that they have out to operating units" and "their artillery can fire chemical weapons, their multiple-launch rocket systems, their free-rocket-over-ground systems, and their Air Force does have that capability."

Iraq is not the only Third World power to be accused of having resorted to chemical weapons in recent times. Libya, under Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, is reported to have used them in warring with its neighboring state of Chad. Qaddafi also ordered the construction, at Rabta, of a factory that he declared was designed for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals but that Western intelligence sources believe has been used to make mustard- and nerve-gas weapons. At various times between 1963 and 1967, the Egyptian military made poison-gas attacks on Royalist supporters in Yemen. According to Elisa D. Harris, an arms-control specialist at the Brookings Institution, other Third World countries known or assumed to possess chemical-weapons stockpiles are Burma, China, Ethiopia, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Syria, Taiwan, and Vietnam. And others are suspected of developing or seeking to buy such armaments, in the belief that the so-called "poor man's nuclear weapon" will increase their power and prestige in their sections of the world.



Despite insistent denials by West European authorities, it has been clear for some time that the design and construction of the chemical-weapons plants in Iraq and Libya were carried out with the assistance of West European chemical companies, which also undertook to supply them once they were built. While this ugly commerce was going on, European authorities apparently looked the other way, until widespread publicity obliged them to take official notice of it, whereupon, last year, the chief executive of the West German company responsible for providing Libya with equipment for its Rabta plant was prosecuted and convicted in a West German court for his company's illicit activities. Over the years, such prosecutions have been rare in any country: an international trade in chemical weapons and precursor materials has been flourishing for decades, and has commonly involved such surreptitious means as the use of dummy corporations, concealed routes, and faked shipping manifests. Bringing this traffic under the rule of international law is only one of the serious problems facing a chemical-weapons convention; another is the increasing proliferation of chemical technology among politically unpredictable national regimes. Such proliferation, notably in the Middle East, seems in part to have arisen as a by-product of the intensive development of chemical and biological weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union over the past forty years.

"*Remember, Garvey, cash is queen.*"

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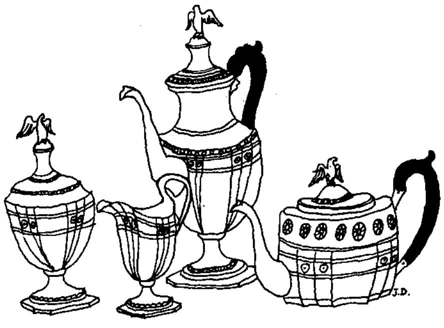
THE wartime use of modern chemical weapons began in the First World War, a few months after the outbreak of hostilities. Tear gas, which was part of the anti-riot equipment of the French police, was released against German troops on the Western Front, and the Germans retaliated by firing artillery shells loaded with tear gas upon Allied trenches. Then, in the ninth month of the war, German forces near Ypres greatly escalated the use of chemical weapons by releasing a cloud of chlorine gas—a choking agent—upon French-colonial front-line troops, who retreated in panic, opening a four-mile gap in the Allied lines. The exact number of casualties has never been determined, but five thousand men were reported to have been killed in the Ypres attack. Whatever the figures, the German commanders, unprepared for the effects of the new weapon, failed to bring forward sufficient reserves to exploit the panic among the French forces, and the Allies were able to repair the break in the line. But from then on gas attacks became an integral part of the war. At first, troops wore makeshift masks made from socks knitted on the home front, or handkerchiefs wetted with urine and tied over nose and mouth, to ward off the chlorine. In mid-1915, the Germans began using phosgene gas, which can cause severe lung damage, and regulation gas masks were issued. By the end of 1916, both sides were using various chemical weapons—artillery shells and mortars loaded with the more powerful agents, and projector devices that lobbed cannisters of gas into the trenches—and were protecting their troops with gas masks. The Germans then introduced the use of mustard gas; although it could not penetrate gas masks any more effectively than chlorine or phosgene, mustard gas was able to seep into the boots and uniforms of troops and cause severe burns, with disabling and sometimes fatal results. As the war went on, special efforts were made by both sides to time poison-gas attacks so as to catch enemy troops unmasked; when troops were likely to be masked, assaults were made with non-lethal gas that could penetrate masks and bring about severe pain or fits of coughing or vomiting. This would cause the victims to take off their masks, whereupon they would inhale lethal varieties of gas which had been launched simultaneously with the non-lethal varieties.

As many as fifty different gases may have been used in the course of the First World War; the number of poison-gas casualties is estimated to have been as high as a million three hundred thousand, including ninety-two thousand deaths. Those troops who survived were almost certain to lead greatly shortened lives, and, invalided out of service, they generally suffered painful impairment for the rest of their days. (Among those stricken on the German side was Adolf Hitler. One night in October, 1918, the British fired mustard gas into an area near Menen, a Belgian town close to the French border, where Hitler was serving as a courier in the 16th Bavarian Reserve Regiment, and he received a large dose of the gas. In "Mein Kampf" he describes the effects: "I stumbled and tottered [back to regimental headquarters] with burning eyes, but taking with me my last report in the War. Already a few hours later the eyes had turned into burning coals; it had grown dark around me." As a result of this injury, he was invalided out for the remaining weeks of the war.) Proportionately, the greatest number of gas casualties—some thirty-five per cent—were sustained by largely untrained and unprepared Russian troops on the Eastern Front.

At this early stage in the history of chemical warfare, Germany was not alone in its willingness to make first use of chemical weapons. In April of 1917, British forces employed gas against the Turks in Palestine, during the Second Battle of Gaza. Interest by the British military in first use of poison gas carried over into the immediate postwar period. In mid-May, 1919, the British War Office sanctioned the offensive use of gas in Egypt, after being notified by the Royal Air Force commander in the Middle East that "gas bomb[s] are required by 31st Wing for use against recalcitrant Arabs as experiment." In a memorandum dated May 12th, Winston Churchill, then the Secretary of State at the War Office, noted, "I am strongly in favour of using poisoned [sic] gas against uncivilised tribes. The moral effect should be so good that the loss of life should be reduced to a minimum." He added, "It is not necessary to use only the most deadly gasses; gasses can be used which cause great inconvenience and would spread a lively terror." As it happened, gas bombs for use against "recalcitrant" Arabs *were not* supplied, according to a subsequent War Office cable to the R.A.F. Middle East Command, "owing to difficulties in supply and in the provision of specially trained personnel." However, the British military did employ poison-gas weapons in northern Russia, as part of their military intervention against Bolshevik forces. In August and September of 1919, hundreds of gas bombs were dropped, by hand, from de Havilland bombers on what was known as the Railway Front in the area of Arkhangel'sk. A letter to the War Office from British military headquarters in northern Russia noted: "We may confidently say that the recent successes of the [White] Russian troops on the Railway Front have been due almost entirely to gas." Russian losses from gas warfare in the First World War and during the British intervention of 1919 have never been forgotten by the Soviet military, who seem to have developed an abiding respect for and faith in the power of chemical weapons.

Churchill's interest in using gas to subdue Arab tribespeople persisted into 1920. A secret memorandum from his office, dated February 19th, informed Sir Hugh Trenchard, the chief of the Air Staff, that the British General Staff "profess themselves unable" to garrison Mesopotamia (now Iraq). The original plans for British occupation had provided some twenty-one million pounds sterling for the purpose, "which is considered to be more than the country is worth." The memo disclosed that the General Staff was now proposing a complete evacuation of British ground forces, and asked whether Trenchard, as air chief, was "prepared to take on Mesopotamia"—a task that, it was suggested, "would . . . entail the provision of some kind of asphyxiating bombs calculated to cause disablement of some kind but not death . . . for use in preliminary operations against turbulent tribes." According to "The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia," by Phillip Knightley and Colin Simpson, which was published in 1970, and in which the text of this memorandum appears, Lieutenant Colonel T. E. Lawrence got wind of Churchill's proposal, went to see Trenchard, and urged on him a settlement that would allow Mesopotamia to exist as "a native state with English advisers only."

In the course of the First World War, despite all the propaganda about enemy atrocities which was put out by the opposing war ministries, there was remarkably little public protest by citizens of nations on either side against the use of poison gas. But afterward revulsion at the horrors of this form of warfare welled up, and undoubtedly contributed to the signing, in Geneva in 1925, of an international protocol prohibiting the use in war of "asphyxiating, poisonous and other gasses," and of "bacteriological methods of warfare." The Geneva Protocol, as this accord was thereafter known, has been subscribed to by the United States and a hundred and twenty-nine other countries, including the Soviet Union and, as it happens, Iraq. It does not, however, prohibit the development, production, or possession of such weapons, or their transfer from one country to another, nor does it provide enforcement measures for violations of its terms. Moreover, it has frequently been ignored. In 1925, the year it was signed, Spanish forces discharged poison gas against rebel groups in Spanish Morocco. Soviet forces reportedly used chemical weapons in China in 1934, during an incursion into Sinkiang Province in support of a friendly regime that was contending with Muslim insurgents. During the Italo-Abyssinian War of 1935-36, Mussolini's Air Force used poison gas on Ethiopian soldiers and civilians. The Japanese employed poison gas and also apparently engaged in acts of biological warfare, including the spread of bubonic plague, during their occupation of Chinese territory between 1937 and 1945. In June, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave public assurances that the United States would not initiate the use of gas warfare, but he also publicly warned the Japanese government of retaliation in kind if the Japanese did not cease the chemical attacks they were making against the Chinese. Roosevelt himself was known to harbor an intense loathing of this type of warfare; nevertheless, his warning was not an idle threat. The United States had stockpiled various gases, and had recently begun developing biological weapons, including anthrax bombs and a botulin solution known as "mud"—all these primarily for deterrent purposes but also for possible first use against an enemy. Britain issued a similar warning to Germany. These moves appear to have had the desired effect. At the time of the Allied landings in Normandy, in 1944, the German High Command, which had adequate supplies of poison gas—including thousands of tons of tabun, an insecticide that the Germans had found to be an effective nerve gas—and



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## I FAIL TO SPEAK TO MY EARTH, MY DESIRE

Having set my heart on you, I remove it
and set it aside. You my desire,
my table, my solid ground, my own true
surface. A mouse in any corner may try
to come out. A wind may cool and blow
us askew. You my desire are not my
property. You may not ever be so.

You my love, my world. Now, have I set my heart on
you? A trace, a kiss, a print, a small brown
scratch: Do you have a clue? Kind as you are,
I am proud or— Nothing in the whole great house
will show where the heart is now. Nor
will the mouse find comforting crumbs. As if, my ground,
I were still waiting to be shown what it is I am for.

—ELIZABETH MACKLIN

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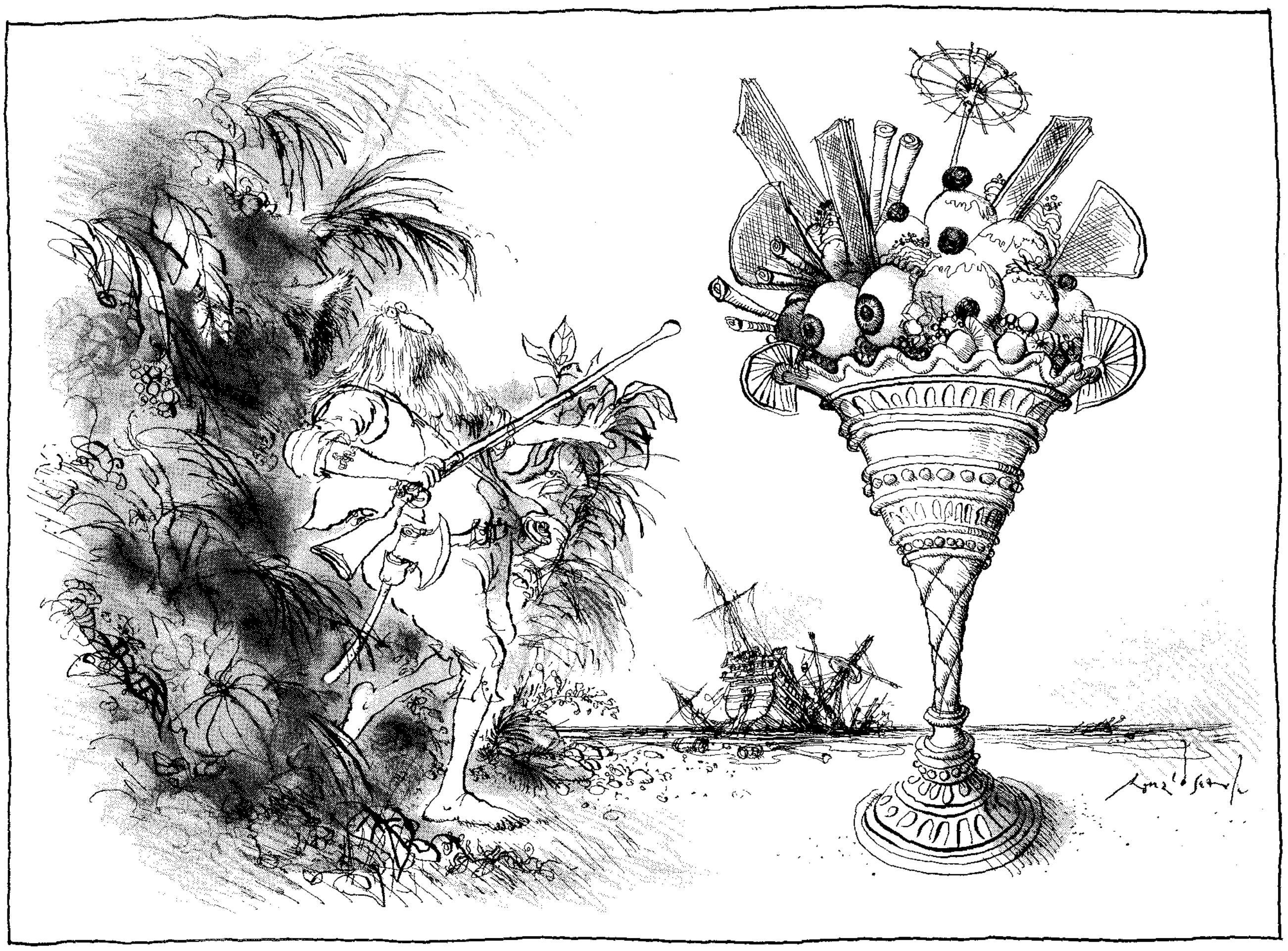

CROSSED PATHS

*Robinson Crusoe Meets Man Sundae*

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enough specially adapted munitions to launch them, was deterred from a chemical attack on the invasion force by the spectre of Allied chemical retaliation against German cities. After the war was over, General Omar Bradley wrote that "even a light sprinkling of persistent gas" on Omaha Beach could have cost the Allies their beachhead.

The British military were apparently the first to make the discovery that plants could be killed by spraying them with solutions containing certain growth regulators, and after the United States entered the war the British shared their research on the military uses of herbicides with the Americans. In 1944, Roosevelt and his military chief of staff discussed a possible first use of chemical or biological agents to destroy Japan's rice crop from the air. This idea took precedence in the minds of the American military over proposals to use poison gas against Japanese troops—though General George Marshall, the Army chief of staff, is reported to have been persuaded of the effectiveness of poison gas in mopping-up operations during a projected invasion of the main Japanese islands. According to a 1944 report quoted in an article by Barton J. Bernstein, in the June, 1987, issue of *Scientific American*, the United States Army Chemical Warfare Service had developed "at least five agents for use against plants," one of them being the herbicide 2,4-D, a component of the defoliant Agent Orange, which the United States sprayed over some four million acres of Vietnamese countryside during the Vietnam War. Bernstein reports that as late in the war as August 3, 1945, the Air Force requested a comprehensive report on the best means and techniques for wiping out enemy crops from the air. The request was made irrelevant by the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atomic bomb, which was followed, on August 14th, by the surrender of Japan.

The nineteen-fifties, with the entrenchment of the Cold War, proved to be a fruitful period for the United States Army Chemical Corps (the successor of the Chemical Warfare Service). Julian Perry Robinson, a senior fellow of the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex and a specialist on the subject of chemical and biological weapons, has estimated that fifty or sixty American military research-and-development projects involving chemical and biological weapons, all of them under conditions of deep secrecy, were going forward during the greater part of the decade. The chemical weapons included two types of nerve gas that the Americans had appropriated during the Allied occupation of Germany—GA (tabun) and GB, which is commonly referred to as sarin—and VX, the first of the so-called second generation of nerve

Victoria Roberts

*"Others have tried to say something in macramé and failed."*

agents. Like tabun and sarin, VX kills within minutes, by asphyxiation, but it is a much more persistent agent, remaining lethal up to two days after dispersal. Various nerve-gas munitions were also developed, including M-23 land mines, which were to be used against the human-wave infantry attacks envisioned as part of any future war in the Far East. A number of more conventional, severely disabling and often lethal chemical weapons were produced and stockpiled: choking gases, such as phosgene and chloropicrin; blistering gases, such as mustard gas and lewisite; and gases that prevent blood cells from delivering oxygen, such as hydrogen cyanide and cyanogen chloride. The biological weapons in this arsenal included five-hundred-pound cluster bombs for the dissemination of, among other things, the toxin that causes botulism, and fléchettes—bullet-size darts—for launching doses of saxitoxin, a shellfish poison that will rapidly kill anyone ingesting food or water contaminated with it. Other germ-warfare agents stockpiled included *Brucella suis*, the pathogen of the deadly swine disease called brucellosis (by 1954, a separate factory had been built for production of the brucellosis pathogen alone); *Francisella tularensis*, the pathogen of tularemia, a disease that is normally spread by rabbits and that causes recurrent fevers in man; and *Bacillus anthracis*, the active agent of anthrax. A production plant for rearing mosquitoes of the *Aedes* strain, to act as carriers of yellow fever, was planned but never got to the building stage; it was designed to rear a hundred and thirty million mosquitoes a month.

The atmosphere of secrecy had one unwelcome consequence for the Chemical Corps: it tended to inhibit the sort of lobbying activities that might otherwise have gained congressional support for these weapons. To counter this difficulty, a policy decision was made within the Eisenhower Administration toward the end of the nineteen-fifties to emphasize the incapacitating rather than the lethal qualities of the chemical arsenal, and, as Dr. Perry Robinson put it in an interview I had with him some time ago, to persuade Congress and the American people "that germ warfare, chemical warfare, is not such a bad thing." At the same time, Roosevelt's policy of no first use of chemical and biological weapons was replaced by a policy of "preparedness for use at the discretion of the President." These actions reflected the concern of the foreign-policy and military establishments with what senior officials maintained was evidence of an ever-increasing Soviet arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Such evidence was cited as proof of Soviet determination to achieve not just a reasonable deterrent capacity but a clear superiority over the West in chemical and biological armaments. The United States, the establishment maintained, was precariously lagging in the task of assembling an appropriate deterrent force. Congress responded by more than tripling the chemical- and biological-weapons budgets between 1959 and 1964.

THE Vietnam War provided a new impetus for the expansion of American chemical and biological weaponry. CS gas—a standard riot-control agent that causes skin and eye irritation—and other harassing or incapacitating agents were used to flush Vietcong from tunnels and underground bunkers. These chemical agents had been secretly introduced into use early in the war without prior Presidential knowledge or approval, but later they became an accepted part of American military operations in Vietnam. Riot-control agents are deemed by the United States to be outside the purview of the Geneva Protocol—a view that is not held by most of the other members of the United Nations. In 1975, after the United States Senate got around to ratifying the protocol, President Gerald Ford issued an executive order reserving the right of the United States military to use riot-control agents in specific "defensive modes." And in fact the Pentagon has authorized General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the United States commander in the Persian Gulf, to use tear gas in various search-and-rescue operations there—an authority that was also granted to United States troops during the invasion of Panama. The Pentagon's action has prompted some American and allied officials to object that the use of tear gas might provide Saddam Hussein with an excuse to indulge in an all-out chemical offensive.

The role that the Chemical Corps played in promoting some of its favored weapons (and its own standing in the military bureaucracy) in the early days

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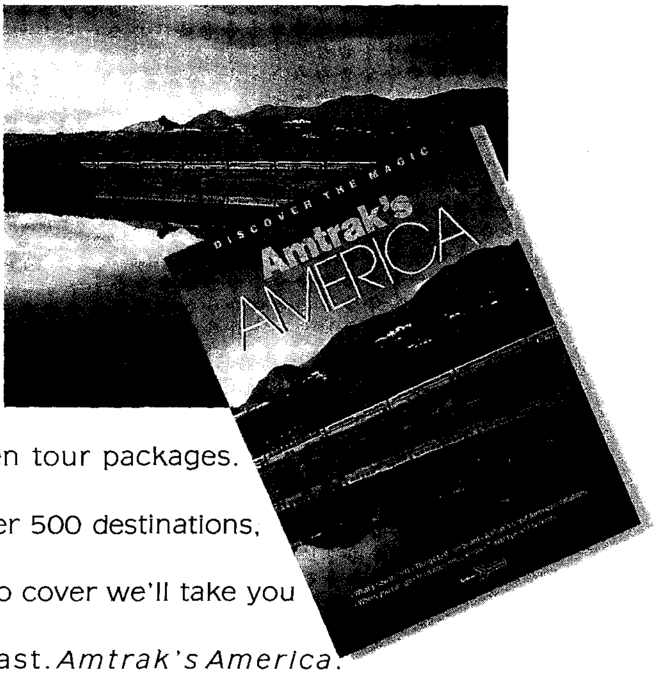

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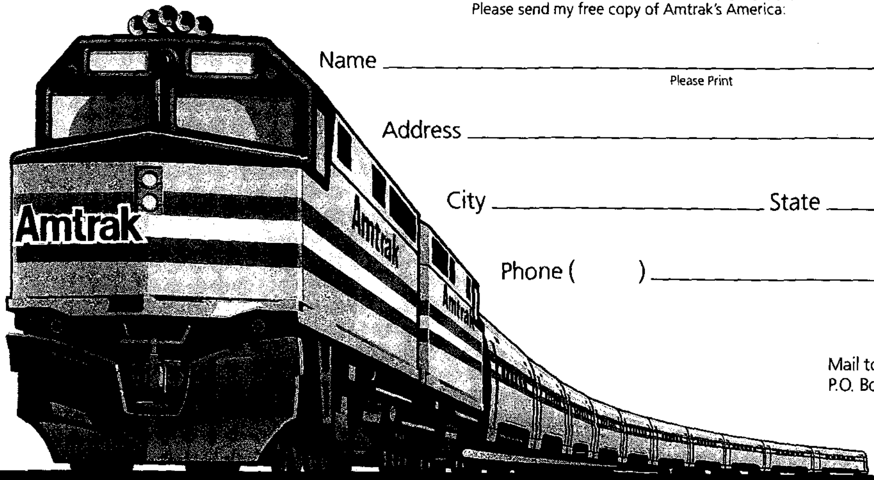

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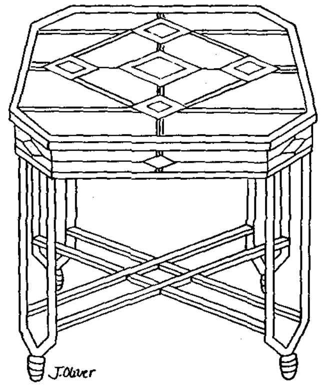
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Vietnam War is of some interest. According to Dr. Perry Robinson, the Corps produced a position paper in 1961 setting forth thirteen options, of varying severity, that could be pursued in support of the counterinsurgency program in Vietnam. They ranged from tactical employment of tear gas to the widespread use of germs. Three of the proposed options, from the lower part of the scale, were put into actual use: the employment of CS gas for clearing tunnels; the use of herbicidal spraying for destruction of food supplies that might be available to the Vietcong (and for the creation of refugees, who, it was calculated, would be forced to move into areas controlled by the South Vietnamese); and the defoliation of forest areas deemed to provide cover for Vietcong. Adoption of these measures considerably heightened the reputation of the Chemical Corps—at least, in the initial period of the war, before strong unfavorable public reaction to the use of chemical weapons in Vietnam set in.

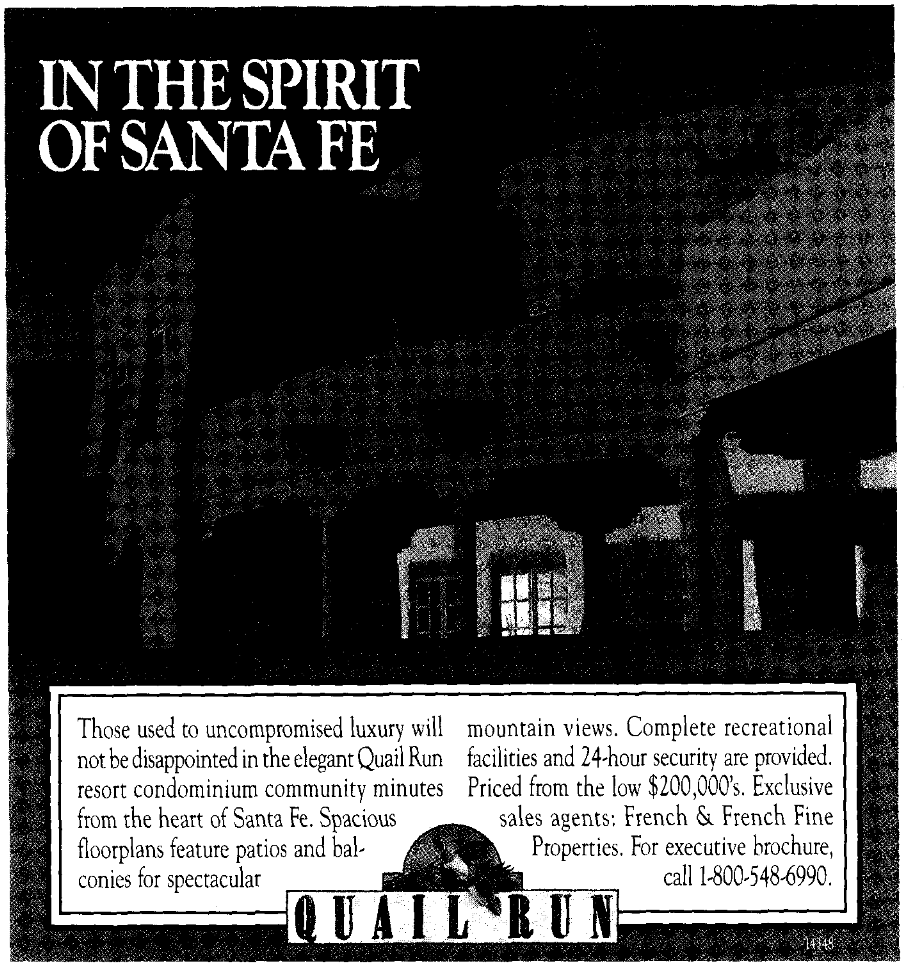


Biological weapons fostered by the Chemical Corps in the mid-sixties included staphylococcal enterotoxin B, designed to incapacitate troops by inducing vomiting and diarrhea; anthrax spores; the virus responsible for Venezuelan equine encephalitis; *Coxiella burneti*, a rickettsial pathogen that causes Q fever; and a strain of tularemia which not only is highly infectious but also has a mortality rate of twenty-five or thirty per cent. (This strain became something of a mainstay of the biological-weapons program promoted by the Corps.) But serious practical questions were raised by critics, even within the military, concerning the development of these weapons, which would have to pass field tests—tests that posed serious risks to man and the environment—before being accepted for use. "They would have had to do the testing out in the Pacific somewhere, way out in the ocean," Dr. Perry Robinson told me. "And this focussed opposition to the program—which already existed—in, for example, the Pacific Strategic Air Command. The opposition pointed to the extraordinary hazards of trying to field-test germ weapons on a large scale. What happens if an albatross flies through a cloud of tularemia germs? Albatrosses can fly right around the world. They might wind up somewhere in Latin America, say, carrying tularemia with them. 'We can't have this sort of thing going on,' the argument went, 'and if we can't test, then the Strategic Air Command isn't going to accept the weapons into its arsenal; therefore, the program as a whole is liable to be demolished.' "

Toward the end of the Vietnam War, the general loss of public confidence in the American military was accompanied by a loss of confidence in its ability to control the activities of the chemical-warfare establishment. A number of accidents and near-accidents involving the testing, storage, and transport of chemical munitions came to public attention, exacerbating the criticism. In 1969, for example, there was a leak of VX gas from a storage site on the island of Okinawa, following which twenty-three American servicemen were hospitalized; moreover, it turned out that the Japanese government had never been told that a nerve agent was being stored there. Perhaps the most dramatic incident occurred in March of 1968, when the Army, while carrying out field tests at Dugway Proving Ground, in Utah, sent up a jet to release quantities of VX in aerosol form onto a designated target area. As the jet climbed out of its target run, some twenty pounds of the VX which had not been dispersed leaked out. Borne by the wind, it drifted some thirty miles from the test site, to an area in which great flocks of sheep were grazing. Six thousand of the sheep died. For several months, the Army denied responsibility, even after making a settlement with the ranchers who had owned the animals. As a result of this incident and the public uproar connected with it, Congress passed legislation that banned any open-air testing of chemical or biological weapons unless the Secretary of Defense certified that such testing was necessary to the national security and the Surgeon General certified that it would not damage public health.

It was against this background of public anxiety and outrage that Richard Nixon, three months after he entered the White House, ordered a review of American chemical- and biological-warfare programs. He received it in the fall of 1969, whereupon he found it politically feasible—given the increasingly bitter division in the country over the Vietnam War—to announce that the United States would cease producing biological weapons and would destroy its stockpiles of them, and would abjure first use of chemical weapons. The Administration was also aware that an agreement for effective international control of these weapons could be a precursor of far more important agreements for international limitations on the possession of nuclear arms. Two months before Nixon's declaration, the Soviet Union and its East European allies had submitted to the United Nations a proposal to ban possession, production, and development of both chemical and biological weapons. The proposal was considered flawed on several counts, notably in that it made no provisions for investigating and verifying violations of the proposed convention or for the imposition of penalties for violations; this was a provision the Americans considered necessary in a meaningful convention. American negotiators also objected to the lumping together of chemical and biological weapons; the United States and other Western governments favored separate pacts to deal with the particular problems involved in the two forms of warfare. Eventually, the Soviet bloc came to accept the Western point of view on these issues, and produced a new draft treaty in March of 1971. After another year of negotiations, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was ready for signing. It went into force in 1975, and has been agreed to by a succession of governments that now number a hundred and ten.

Nixon's declaration and the continuing unfavorable climate of public opinion reduced the Chemical Corps in the early seventies to a state of near-collapse. Federal appropriations for its operations dried up, stockpiles of biological weapons were destroyed, and all facilities that had been used to produce biological and chemical weapons were shut down. By the middle of 1973, legislation that would abolish the Corps altogether was moving through committee, but it never reached the floor of Congress. The Chemical Corps, although it was down, was not entirely out. Even if the Corps and its work had never enjoyed any popularity among military people (I found that utterance of the words "chemical weapons" by officers at the Pentagon in their conversations with me was often followed by a parenthetical "which we don't like"), its abolition was opposed by a number of senior military officers. These people remained convinced that the Soviets were intent on strengthening their offensive chemical-weapons capability, and they did everything they could to keep the Chemical Corps ticking over until the time was more propitious for its resurgence. Their efforts were greatly assisted by the appearance before the House Armed Services Committee in February, 1974, of General Creighton Abrams, the Army chief of staff. General Abrams testified that "one of the most impressive lessons" of the October, 1973, Arab-Israeli war lay in the discovery that Soviet military equipment—Abrams was referring in particular to Soviet tanks provided to Egyptian forces and captured by the Israelis—had surprisingly extensive means of defending troops against attack by chemical, biological, and radiological weaponry. The Army had been taken aback at discovering the "sophistication, completeness, and extensiveness" of such defenses, Abrams said, and he asserted that the United States must improve its own capabilities against such attack and thereby correct "a serious weakness in our defense posture." Besides raising the alarm in Congress, General Abrams set in motion a review by the Chemical Corps of the adequacy of American defenses against chemical and biological weapons. This review resulted in renewed military interest in chemical arms, and in a new round of lobbying on Capitol Hill on behalf of the Corps' objectives. In the meantime, the Corps and its allies had begun promoting binary munitions—a new kind of chemical-weapons delivery system, which seemed to have been designed in part to counter the intense public criticism of the dangers of storing and transporting lethal chemicals. The proposed system would employ chemicals that would assume dangerous form only upon being



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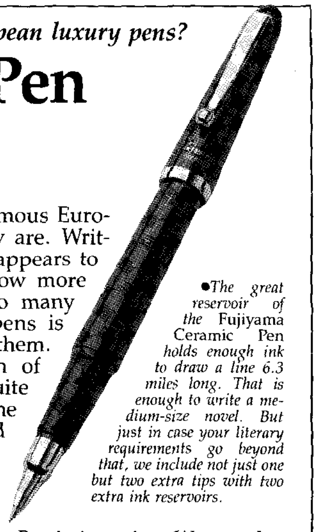

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mixed, this mixing to be activated mechanically when the weapons were launched.

The chemical-weapons lobby was given a significant boost late in 1979, when the State Department released documents relaying reports of interviews with refugees concerning lethal chemical attacks alleged to have been mounted, with direct or indirect Soviet assistance, against anti-Communist tribesmen in Laos. From that point on, the State Department and the Pentagon waged an increasingly assertive campaign to publicize their charges that the Soviets were responsible for chemical-weapons attacks in Southeast Asia—and, as was later charged, in Afghanistan. Their efforts began to assume the aspect of a head-on confrontation with the Soviets on the subject of chemical weapons. Elisa Harris, of Brookings, who has written an informative study on the subject in *International Security*, a publication of the Center for Science and International Affairs, speaks of the "profound implications" of these charges, noting that "they have weakened confidence in and support for existing chemical and biological arms control agreements as well as future agreements in this and other areas." In the midst of the rancorous charges and countercharges concerning the alleged chemical attacks, questions began to be raised by members of the scientific community—and still remain without satisfactory answer—about the validity of the American claims and the manner in which they were propagated. These scientists became convinced that the government was covering up or distorting scientific data, and abusing the scientific process itself, in pursuit of its Cold War objectives.

## POEM AT THE NEW YEAR

Once, out on the water in the clear, early-nineteenth-century twilight,
you asked time to suspend its flight. If wishes could beget more than sobs,
that would be my wish for you, my darling, my angel. But other
principles prevail in this glum haven, don't they? If that's what it is.

Then the wind fell of its own accord.
We went out and saw that it had actually happened.
The season stood motionless, alert. How still the drop was
on the burr I know not. I come all
packaged and serene, yet I keep losing things.

I wonder about Australia. Is it anything like Canada?
Do pigeons flutter? Is there a strangeness there, to complete
the one in me? Or must I relearn my filing system?
Can we trust others to indict us
who see us only in the evening rush hour
and never stop to think? O, I was so bright about you,
my songbird, once. Now, cattails immolated
in the frozen swamp are about all I have time for.
The days are so polarized. Yet time itself is off center.
At least that's how it feels to me.

I know it as well as all the streets in the map of my imagined
industrial city. But it has its own way of slipping past.
There was never any fullness that was going to be;
you stood in line for things, and the soiled light was
impenitent. "Spiky" was one adjective that came to mind,

yet for all its raised or lowered levels I approach this canal.
Its time was right in winter. There was pipe smoke
in cafés, and outside the great ashen bird
streamed from lettered display windows, and waited
a little way off. Another chance. It never became a gesture.

—John Ashbery

* * *

THE American charges of chemical-weapons use in Southeast Asia had their origins in the mid-nineteen-seventies, when various reports in the international press from refugee camps in Thailand suggested that Vietnamese or Vietnamese-backed Communist forces in Laos were waging some form of chemical warfare against Hmong, or Meo, tribesmen who were resisting attempts to subdue them. The Hmong, a hill people who practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, with opium as their main cash crop, were accomplished guerrilla fighters. In the early seventies, Hmong tribesmen who were resisting the Communist-led Pathet Lao were secretly funded and armed by the C.I.A. When the Laotian government was taken over by the Communists, in 1975, most of the Hmong continued their resistance in mountain redoubts scattered through Laos—notably in the area around the mountain of Phu Bia, north of Vientiane.

In September, 1978, a particularly detailed Agence France-Presse dispatch from Bangkok reported that refugees from Laos were saying that "poison gas" had been used against groups of Hmong near Phu Bia, and it quoted a Hmong who was a former officer in the Royal Laotian Army as saying that twenty-five of his relatives had died after a gas attack on his village by Vietnamese forces. He reported that hostile aircraft repeatedly flying over the village had dropped bombs that, as they exploded, "released a greenish cloud," whereupon villagers "developed headaches [and] dizziness, vomited blood and died shortly afterward." A U.P.I. dispatch in the *International Herald Tribune* on October 23rd quoted one of the Hmong as saying that his village had been bombarded by rockets, which had burst in clouds of red, green, yellow, and white gas: "The people who sniffed the gas spun around, fainted and later died. They vomited very much. . . . Every time they used the gas rockets at least 15–20 people were killed. I have never seen anything like it. All the animals in the vicinity were killed. The gas poisoned the water. We could find no shelter from it." And on October 31st a dispatch by a staff correspondent for the Baltimore *Sun* from Nong Khai, the site of a refugee camp in Thailand, reported that gas attacks against the Hmong had been increasing throughout the preceding year. The reason for the attacks, the report said, was that the Laotian Communist regime was determined to drive the Hmong into the lowland plains, where they would come under Communist control and be put into socialist collectives. The dispatch quoted Dr. Levi Roque, of an organization called the International Committee to Save the Meos, as describing the treatment of the Hmong by the Laotian regime and its Vietnamese overseers as "so brutal, so systematic, that it can only be characterized as genocide." Rather than move to the lowlands, many Hmong chose to make the long trek to Thailand. Once the refugees were in Thailand, which they entered after crossing the Mekong River—doing so, according to dispatches, by clinging to bundles of bamboo tied together with reeds (hardly any of these hill people knew how to swim)—they settled in Thai refugee camps near the border, and the stories of chemical attacks, with weapons variously described as rockets and bombs launched from Laotian and Vietnamese aircraft, began to filter out.

One of the most comprehensive of these reports—appearing in the Baltimore *Sun* on August 13, 1979—was written by the correspondent Stanley Karnow, who had visited Loei, the site of one of the Thai camps. Karnow wrote that the Communists who controlled Laos had been "exterminating the Meos out of revenge for their service to the United States," and went on to say that "the most shocking aspect of this drive against the Meo . . . is the accumulation of evidence indicating that the Communists have been using poison gas against them." He cited the recollections of, among others, a young veteran of the C.I.A.-backed Hmong army, who said that one day early in 1978 two jet aircraft had flown at an altitude of about a thousand feet over the village of Nam Phun, where the young man was at the time, and had sprayed a cloud of what he described as "yellow rain" over the village; a couple of days later, some twenty people in the village died after severe attacks of diarrhea and vomiting, and about a hundred other villagers, including the young man himself, fell sick. Toward the end of his dispatch, Karnow, who in the process of reporting had apparently discussed the poison-gas issue with American diplomats in Thailand, wrote that the refugee accounts were "reinforced by evidence that the Communists have four chemical warfare depots" in Laos. He further noted that "the chemicals presumably have been provided by the Soviet Union, which helps the Laotian regime to maintain its air force of about 20 MIG-21s, also furnished by Moscow," but he emphasized the fact that there was no evidence that such planes had been flown by Soviet pilots. "It may be . . . that an investigation on the ground in Laos by the Red Cross or Amnesty International could uncover firmer proof—or, perhaps, reveal the Meo accounts and the other evidence to be illusory," he added.

The mention in Karnow's report of "yellow rain" appears to be the first use in the American press of those two words to characterize what might have befallen Hmong tribesmen in Laos. Before long, the same words were to achieve extraordinary notoriety in the United States and become, over the following decade, the center of a bitter controversy that cast a persistent shadow over arms-control negotiations between the two great powers.

The Carter Administration had told the Laotian government of its concern over the reported use of poison gas against the Hmong nearly a year before Karnow filed his dispatch, and toward the end of 1978 the State Department instructed its missions in Southeast Asia to seek further information about the possible use of poison gas in Laos. Early in 1979, the Administration again expressed its concern to the Laotian authorities, both in Vientiane and in the Laotian Embassy in Washington; it also raised the poison-gas issue with the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. That May, the State Department sent two representatives to refugee camps in Thailand to interview any Hmong who claimed to have eyewitness knowledge of poison-gas attacks, and in September the Pentagon dispatched an Army medical team to Thailand for the same purpose. The State Department representatives completed their report in June; it was based on twenty-two interviews with Hmong who claimed to be either victims or eyewitnesses of chemical attacks, and it concluded that there was reason to believe that some sort of chemical agent was being employed against the Hmong in Laos.

The findings of the Army's medical team, based on thirty-eight interviews with Hmong, were made public in December, in the course of hearings held by a House Foreign Affairs subcom-

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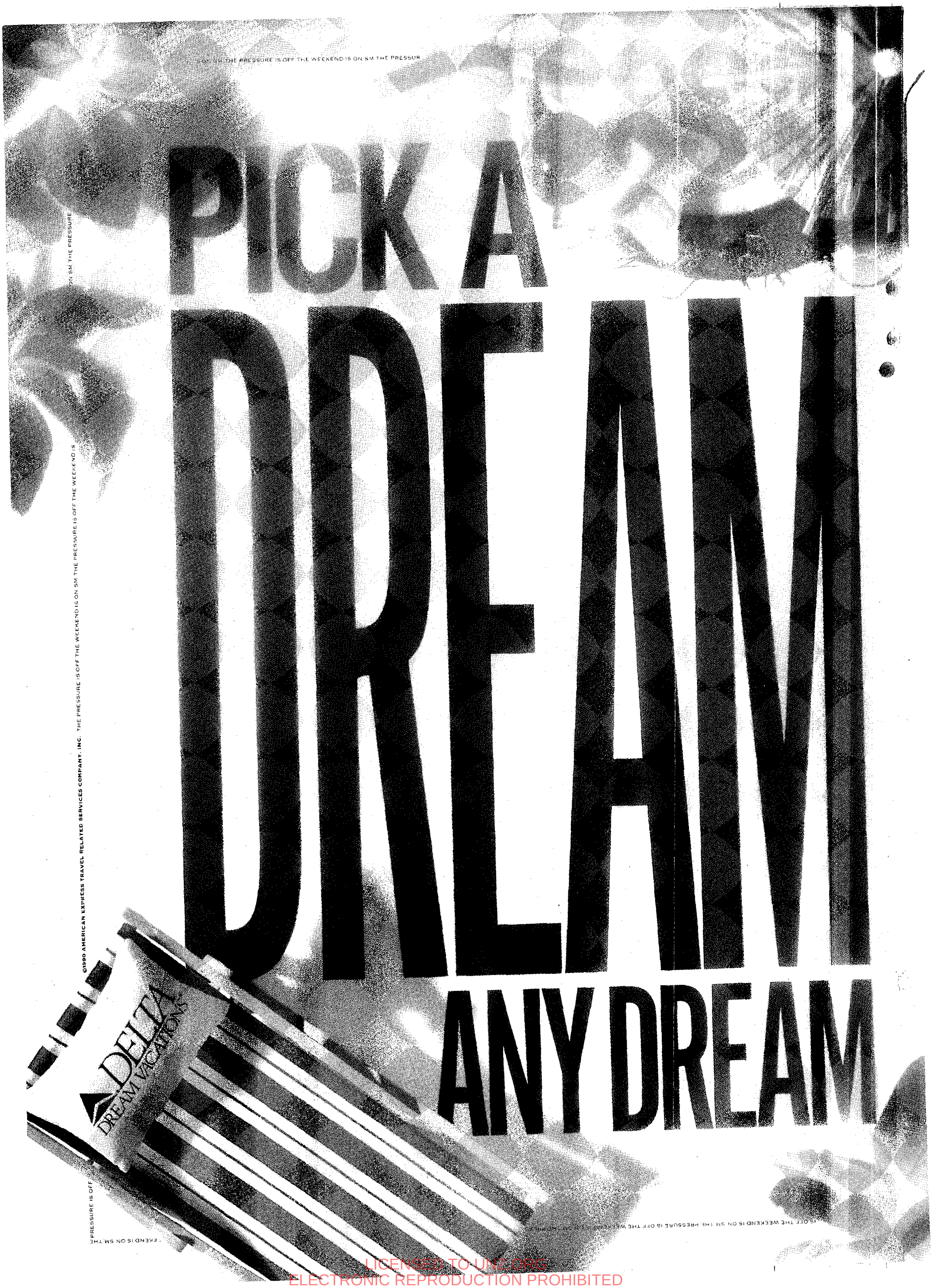
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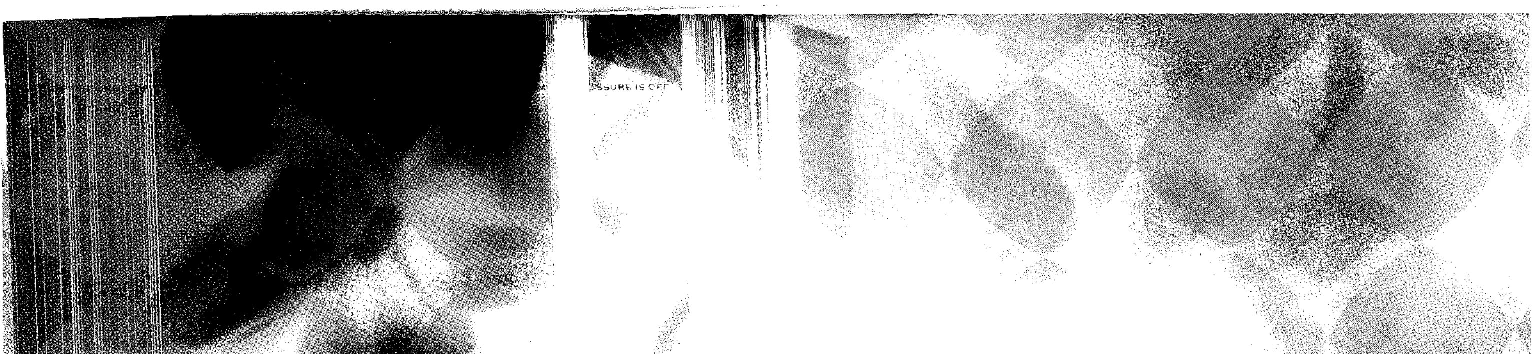

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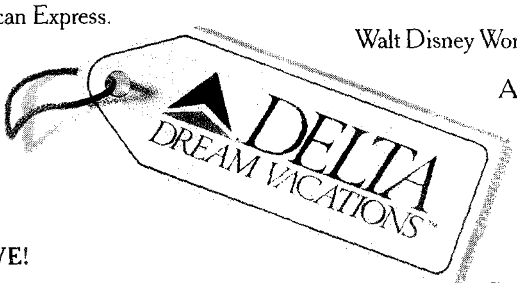

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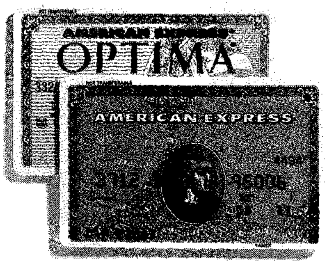

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mittee. At the hearings, Colonel Charles Lewis, who had headed the medical team, testified that many of those interviewed said that at first, between 1976 and 1978, they had been attacked by aircraft carrying rockets that exploded and released gas, and that later, from the latter half of 1978 through the first part of 1979, most of the poisonous material had been sprayed directly from the aircraft rather than released by rockets. According to Colonel Lewis, the symptoms reported by the Hmong suggested that "at least two, and probably three, different chemical agents may have been used," and that one of the agents "probably corresponds to a nerve agent." Symptoms suggesting the use of a nerve agent included "sweating, tearing, excessive salivation, difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, dizziness, weakness, convulsions, and death occurring shortly after exposure." In addition, Colonel Lewis said, there were signs attributable to exposure to a riot-control or irritant agent, including "marked irritation or burning of the eyes . . . irritation and burning of the nose and throat, coughing, burning and tightness in the chest, headache, and in a few cases nausea and vomiting." And there were also signs that could not be related to any known single agent, including profuse bleeding from the mucus membranes of the nose, the lungs, and the gastrointestinal tract; these symptoms, too, were often followed by death. The indications, he testified, were that between seven hundred and a thousand Hmong had died as a result of the use of chemical agents, and that "many times this number" had been made ill. The colors of the materials released, as reported by refugees, included red, green, and white, but the predominant color was yellow.

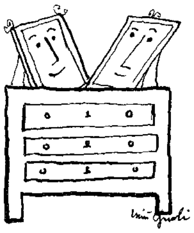
Colonel Lewis's testimony was reinforced by the publication, in the printed account of the hearings, of an unclassified paper prepared by the C.I.A. According to this paper, "strong circumstantial evidence" suggested that chemical-warfare agents had been used against Hmong tribesmen by Vietnamese and Laotian forces. The paper said that while the attacks had been concentrated in the Phu Bia area they had also occurred over a large area of northern Laos. In the worst case reported, a village blockaded inside a Laotian troop cordon underwent twenty chemical-warfare attacks over a fifteen-day period. The C.I.A. paper offered other details. Referring to the reports of various colors in the vapor associated with the explosion of bombs or rockets, it said, "We believe that the colors simply indicate that smoke was used or that dye was added to the agent(s) so that areas covered could be observed." It reported that in some cases the agent was described as a dustlike gas that burned through the leaves of trees on which it fell, and poisoned open water. "Victims reportedly died usually within 30 minutes to an hour after the appearance of symptoms, which began almost immediately after drinking contaminated water," the paper said, and added, "Based on the reports of physical symptoms and characteristics of the agents, at least two types of CW [military shorthand for chemical warfare] agents probably have been used: a non-persistent agent such as chlorine or phosgene, and a blister agent, presumably a mustard type."

The day after the subcommittee hearings, an essay by William Safire on the Op-Ed page of the *Times* pushed the chemical-warfare issue a step further. Entitled "Yellow Rain," the article began, "The Laotians call it 'the yellow rain.' It struck four times during the month of February, 1978, killing and sickening hundreds of Hmong tribesmen near Xiangkhoang." Safire suggested that the yellow rain was mustard gas, "the most loathsome weapon of World War I," along with a second gas, either phosgene or chlorine. Citing "new information," he asserted that the real force behind the reported attacks appeared to be the Soviet Union, "which provided the planes and rockets . . . and which has an extensive chemical warfare program," and he added, "Now it appears that the Soviet Union has been interested in running tests on human beings." He continued, "I am informed that a seven-man team of Soviet chemical warfare experts visited the Laotian cities of Pakse and Seno to inspect warehouses containing . . . 'chemical explosives.' . . . These supplies include shells for artillery, as well as bombs and rockets containing the mustard and phosgene or chlorine gas. The same Soviet team was seen at three installations, and its presence was reported separately; the intelligence is hard." Attempts were being made to check reports that poison gas was also being used by the Vietnamese in Cambodia, he wrote, and while evidence of that was not as solid as the confirmed Laotian reports, Safire saw a pattern emerging: "The Soviet-supported regimes in Vietnam and Laos need a terror weapon; the Soviets see an opportunity to test their chemical arsenal without using it themselves. The result is the reintroduction of poison gas into the world's actively-used weaponry, with nothing but the most pipsqueak admonitions from low-level American diplomats, a ho-hum reaction from our allies, silence from the third world, and a cool denial from the Communist Pathet Lao."

KEYS
KEYS MADE
Judith Shahn

A week later, the House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons in Southeast Asia. During the debate, Richard Ichord, a Democrat from Missouri, urged a buildup of America's chemical-weapons capability as a deterrent to the threat posed by the perceived Soviet buildup of those armaments.

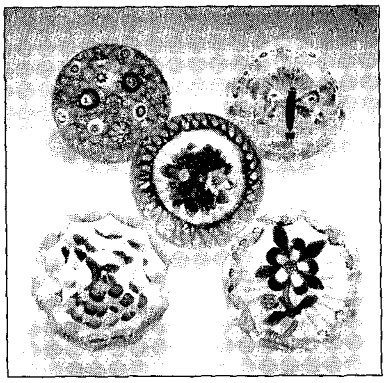
In April, 1980, at a hearing held jointly by the House subcommittees on International Security and Scientific Affairs and on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Under-Secretary of State Mathew Nimetz testified that intelligence reports continued to indicate that Vietnamese and Laotian forces were using chemical agents against Hmong tribesmen, but he conceded that the government was "not in a position either to confirm or disprove conclusively" such reports. He also said that there was "enough circumstantial evidence to warrant serious concern" about attacks in Cambodia and, further, that since the late summer of 1979 the United States government had been receiving reports from Afghan rebels and refugees of Soviet forces using chemical weapons on resistance strong-holds in Afghanistan. Dissatisfied with what it considered a lack of appropriate reaction on the part of other governments, the Carter Administration sent an interagency team of political, technical, and intelligence specialists to Europe in May, to brief our allies on the reports of chemical warfare and to request support for an international investigation into them. In August, a compendium of these reports was circulated to the United Nations member governments, and on December 12, 1980, largely as a result of American pressure, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution authorizing an investigation into the American allegations about the use of chemical weapons.



Thus far, the United States government, for all the general conclusions it had apparently reached about Soviet involvement in chemical warfare, had not revealed the specific nature of any of the agents supposedly used. But this reticence ended in the fall of 1981. On September 13th, Secretary of State Alexander Haig gave an address in West Berlin before the Berlin Press Association—an address presumably aimed at bolstering West European morale and shoring up the NATO alliance in the face of increasing opposition to plans of the Reagan Administration to deploy new missiles in West Germany and to go ahead with production of the neutron bomb. While some fifty thousand anti-nuclear activists demonstrated several blocks away, Secretary Haig deplored, before his audience of media people, "a growing double standard in the West toward appropriate norms of international behavior," and declared that the Soviet Union, notwithstanding its professions of peace and good will, had "engaged in an enormous military buildup beyond all requirements of self-defense." He continued, "At the very time when the United States is being accused of delay on arms control, others appear to be violating one of the oldest arms-control agreements—that prohibiting the use of toxins. For some time now, the international community has been alarmed by continuing reports that the Soviet Union and its allies have been using lethal chemical weapons in Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan." And he said that "we now have physical evidence from Southeast Asia which has been analyzed and found to contain abnormally high levels of three potent mycotoxins—poisonous substances not indigenous to the region and which are highly toxic to man and animals." After reminding his audience that "the use in war of such toxins is prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol" and that "their very manufacture for such purposes is strictly forbidden" by the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, he said that "the United States will have more to say on this subject."

The Haig charges made prominent news throughout the Western world. On the day after the speech, the State Department held a press conference, at which Walter Stoessel, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, read a statement saying that, following earlier, unsuccessful attempts to obtain physical evidence of chemical warfare in Southeast Asia, "we have recently uncovered significant—though preliminary—information to demonstrate clearly that our concerns were entirely justified." Specifically, Stoessel went on, "we believe we have obtained good evidence that rather than a traditional lethal chemical agent, three potent and lethal mycotoxins of the trichothecene group have been used"—a mycotoxin being, Stoessel explained, "a poison typically produced in nature by living organisms." According to the Stoessel statement, the findings rested on analysis of a leaf-and-stem sample from Cambodia; the detected levels of trichothecenes were "up to twenty times greater than any recorded natural outbreak"; and "these mycotoxins do not occur naturally in Southeast Asia."

A fact sheet distributed at the press conference summarized the effects of the three detected toxins: rapid onset of vomiting, multiple hemorrhages of mucus membranes, bloody diarrhea, tingling of the skin with formation of multiple small blisters, and death. The *Times* noted the presence of "a panel of defense, intelligence and medical experts" who, "in an unusual move, were not identified by name or title." According to the *Times*, members of the panel "said that for a number of years American specialists had been seeking a conventional chemical compound to explain the reported effects of 'yellow rain,' " and only recently had been able to " 'shake out' evidence that



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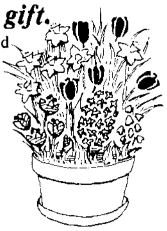

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they were dealing with another kind of biological-chemical agent." As background, presumably provided by the panel, the article passed on this information:

> Mycotoxins occur naturally in certain parts of the world, among them the Soviet Union, where outbreaks of such poisoning have been traced to grain stored improperly in damp conditions. Soviet scientists have been researching the toxins for more than 50 years, Administration officials say. The officials appeared to link Soviet and Eastern European expertise in the field to the appearance of the chemical weapon in areas in which the Soviet Union is strategically involved, but they said they had no direct evidence of the link.

Of the effects of yellow rain on vegetation the fact sheet stated that leaf surfaces on which the "toxic 'yellow rain' or powder"—this seemed to be the first time that the government itself had employed the term, even in quotation marks—had descended developed "numerous scattered, very small (about 1 mm.) scorched or dark circles with holes in the center." It noted that these marks did not resemble any known effect of conventional chemical-warfare agents, herbicides, or plant pathogens, and it further asserted, "A peculiar quality of the trichothecene toxin is the production of just such an unusual effect by causing multiple foci of minute biochemical oxidation or burns in vegetation." The fact sheet also noted that mycotoxins are known to have caused many deaths; for example, in 1944 thirty per cent of the population of the Soviet city of Orenburg, on the Ural River, was said to have become seriously ill from a natural infestation of trichothecene toxin, and more than ten per cent of the population of the Orenburg district died from the infestation. But, the fact sheet emphasized, mycotoxins are not native to warm climates, such as prevail in Southeast Asia. In the same vein, it noted that the facilities needed to synthesize the quantities of mycotoxins reported to have been used in the yellow-rain attacks did not exist in Southeast Asia but did exist in the Soviet Union, and that mycotoxins had figured prominently in Soviet scientific literature since the nineteen-thirties.

PRINCIPALLY because I had written a number of articles on the subject of American herbicidal operations in Southeast Asia and had retained an interest in chemical warfare and its impact on arms-control negotiations, I had been keeping up with the press reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons in Laos, Cambodia, and Afghanistan. A week or so after reading accounts of Secretary Haig's Berlin speech, I decided to call on Matthew Meselson, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Harvard University, and ask for his views on the American charges. Meselson is an expert on the subject of chemical and biological weapons. His involvement with them began in the summer of 1963, when he worked in Washington as a consultant for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and started reading the available literature on such weapons systems. He came across a document—Army Field Manual 3-10—concerned with the nature and conduct of biological warfare, which, the manual made clear, the United States was prepared to wage defensively and, if necessary, offensively. Army Field Manual 3-10 helped to turn Meselson into a scientific activist opposed to the piling up of chemical and biological weapons, which his reading convinced him were as unnecessary as they were dangerous. Through papers that he circulated and personal contacts that he made, Meselson exerted whatever influence he could—and he can be a very persuasive man—among fellow-scientists, members of Congress, military people, and White House and State Department officials to make a case for reining in, and eventually ending, the production of such weapons in this country, and he also argued for an effective international agreement on similar controls. His conversations on the subject with Henry Kissinger, a colleague at Harvard who soon thereafter became Richard Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs, helped lead to the review that resulted in the President's order to destroy American stocks of biological weapons and to cease further production of them. Meselson's researches on herbicidal warfare took him to Vietnam in the late summer of 1970, as the head of a team under the aegis of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, to investigate the impact of defoliation operations; in the central highlands, he investigated complaints by Montagnard tribesmen about ill effects that chemical raids on their villages had had on them. Representations by Meselson to key Administration figures are believed to have exerted a crucial influence in bringing about the eventual suspension of the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Meselson and I talked in his office, in the Fairchild Biochemistry Building, on Divinity Avenue. I hadn't seen him for several years—since the winter of 1969-70, when I had interviewed him in the course of reporting on herbicidal warfare in Southeast Asia. He looked much the same as he had then—round face, thin sandy hair—and he sounded the same, too, with a softly modulated voice, firm diction, and a speaking rhythm that conveyed an unusual tenacity. "It has been a puzzle as to what this stuff is," he said, referring to the colored smoke or rain that Hmong refugees had described. "We were impressed with the frequency with which the Montagnards, in Vietnam, reported that the spraying of herbicides killed old people and very young people. Yet ethnic Vietnamese didn't report deaths. This seemed very puzzling to us—that, of two groups of people, one would be reporting deaths and the other not reporting them from what were presumably similar herbicidal sprays. The reason I mention this is that when you are dealing with an ethnic group about which you know very little you may not realize that—for example—hearsay can lead to the perception of large numbers of deaths occurring. There are other questions, too. Is their diet different enough so that something that isn't normally lethal will lead to death? Or is their life sufficiently different so that they are imagining it? So I came to this new situation—with the Hmong in Laos—wondering whether, in the first place, this was a gas war at all. I don't know

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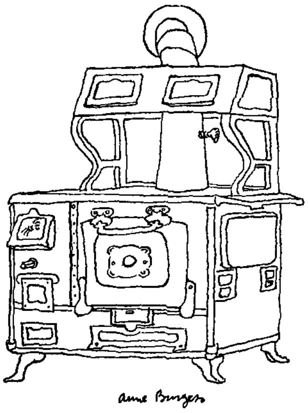
the answer to that question. However, from the interviews with the Hmong I did conclude that if a chemical war was involved there must be at least two different chemicals in use, because I couldn't find one whose use could explain all the effects described. The particular thing I couldn't explain was all those deaths. Otherwise, the agent I would have thought of as a possibility was an arsenical agent called DM, or adamsite." In its pure form, Meselson explained, adamsite may be yellow, orange, or red, depending on how long it has been stored. Laid down in water, it will slowly form a lethal poison, and if the Hmong had drunk from ponds or other surface-water sources contaminated with adamsite, that might account for at least some of the reported deaths.

Meselson's reaction to the government's allegations was one of considerable reserve. His doubts appeared to center on the wisdom of basing government policy on a single analysis of a single leaf-and-stem sample from Cambodia. Even the most potent mycotoxins known, he said, were not nearly as toxic as nerve gas, which would be a far more effective weapon for the offensive military uses charged by the State Department. Meselson pointed out that the three mycotoxins identified were derived from the Fusarium fungus, a type well known to gardeners as the cause of wilt among plants such as tomatoes and cucumbers. "Fusarium is either the most common fungus on our planet or nearly so, and a significant proportion of the fusaria that have been studied do make these toxins," he said. "The government claims that such toxins are not found in Southeast Asia, but there have been published reports of their occurrence in tropical India. The government statement also says that the single sample was found positive at a very high level. Now, the thing that would immediately occur to any chemist is: Since these toxins are made by a fungus with worldwide distribution, why wasn't an analysis made not only of samples from the battle zone where the stuff was supposedly used but also of samples of similar vegetation from similar ecological environments, collected at the same time and stored and shipped and analyzed in the same manner, to find out what the natural background level is? There has been inadequate study of Fusarium in the tropics, and only one analysis of the Cambodian sample. For independent scientists to come to any conclusions about the government's assertions a lot more research is needed." Meselson noted that the government scientists he had talked to "do sound more or less convinced of their case." But he went on, "When I have asked them specific questions—such as why they believe that these toxins don't occur naturally in Southeast Asia—I have been completely dissatisfied with the answers. And therefore I must suspend judgment. I certainly can't accept their confidence, or near-confidence, in the available evidence. This is not a very orderly way for the United States government to proceed—with this kind of precipitate statement on the basis of a single sample, and with no controls."



All in all, the government's decision to publicize the findings without adequate study of the facts seemed to Meselson to be a political one. The government's own scientists, he said, had urged certain cautions on the Administration—cautions that were ignored. "The reports of chemical attacks in Southeast Asia deserve serious attention," he said. "But we mustn't allow ourselves to be stampeded into foolish practices by simplistic reasoning—particularly when we see how this has every hallmark of very hasty decision making. There is an issue raised by all this that is as important as whatever the Russians may have done with these weapons. What we are really dealing with is whether the immense progress yet to come in the biological sciences is going to be diverted to military purposes. Today, we don't know a great deal about life processes, but we are in a period of extremely rapid growth of knowledge in this area. And we can imagine the acceleration of knowledge as to how we can manipulate life processes in ways that are malign, or terminate them. Mankind may be well advised to make a contribution to the future of the species by seeing to it that this knowledge not be used for military purposes, and that research in this area not be conducted under conditions of military secrecy. 'If we think that some other country is doing this, *we* won't': that's what President Nixon was saying when he announced unconditionally that the United States would permanently renounce all development and production of biological weapons."

This was a crucial time for the future of chemical weapons, Meselson said, pointing out that the issue of chemical-weapons attacks in Southeast Asia was being used to pressure Congress to begin funding production of 155-mm. nerve-gas binary artillery shell. By starting production of this and other binary weapons, he warned, the United States risked instigating a whole new chemical-arms race. He told me that the previous July he had gone to the Pentagon and spoken "to people on the very highest level" and had found that "we had no convincing reason to believe that the Soviets had added to their arsenal of poison-gas weapons at all during the decade in which we refrained from doing so." Of the arguments advanced within the Reagan Administration that the United States badly needed to counter Soviet advances in chemical weaponry Meselson said, "We have to assume, out of prudence, that the Russians have chemical weapons. But the image that they are making them at an immense rate, adding to their stockpiles at a gigantic rate, an image that is designed to fuel an emotional response—there's no evidence for this. At some point, we have to draw the line by saying, 'We will try to construct a good defense establishment and try to defend our forces,' but we ought not to be subject to knee-jerk reactions to every will-o'-the-wisp that looks like a threat."

Clearly, Meselson considered the reports of yellow-rain attacks in Southeast Asia just such a will-o'-the-wisp. As an example of unreliable data being used to justify a buildup in the chemical-weapons field, he described the consequences of the capture of Soviet-made armored vehicles in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. "Within our government and in the press much was made of the discovery of equipment that was supposed to indicate Soviet offensive chemical intentions," he said. "The first was a filtration system in the tanks which would protect their crews against poison gas, and the second was a new nerve-gas antidote, said to be particularly effective against soman"—another nerve agent developed by the Germans in the Second World War, and seized by the Soviets after the German military collapse. "As to the tanks, Soviet tanks did not contain filtration equipment against chemical weapons or poison gas, but they did have equipment to filter out dust and fallout particles, and there may have been confusion between that and chemical-filtration equipment," he said. "Soviet personnel carriers do have chemical-filtration equipment, but that fact was known before the 1973 war. And it is a reasonable measure, because those vehicles are exceedingly cramped, and the Soviets put people in there. If they had to wear their Soviet gas masks and capes, which are hotter and more cumbersome than ours—the capes are made of rubberized fabric, and the gas masks cover the whole head—these people would melt. They would pass out in the heat." And yet the equipment, he said, "was publicized as though it were new."

As for the newly formulated nerve-gas antidote, Meselson said that the discovery was made "at a time when the scientific quality of the chemical-warfare people dealing with antidotes was at a low point." The Army concluded, he said, that since the Soviets had a new antidote, it meant that they were contemplating using gas. The new antidote was copied and, without adequate testing, distributed to our soldiers in Europe; not long afterward, the Army discovered that the substance was a well-known treatment for certain neurological disorders and that it caused hallucinations if taken in more than minuscule amounts. It was rapidly pulled out, and the troops were resupplied with atropine, the standard nerve-gas antidote. It turned out that the Soviets had supplied the tanks with atropine and the Egyptians had replaced this with the new antidote, which they had bought on the world market, probably from Bulgaria. Nevertheless, Meselson went on, the alarm that had been set off by the antidote's dire implications had been used "to beat the bushes to get more money for chemical weapons"—despite the fact that the conclusions drawn by the military were based on "very poor science."

"I see the making of more of these weapons as an almost religious gesture to impress our adversaries, and ourselves, with our chemical toughness," Meselson continued. "We already have large stockpiles of nerve gas, and as for our going into the production of binary weapons there are even chemical people in the military who don't want them, because they are more complex to use on the battlefield and haven't been tested. I think that to go ahead with manufacturing binary artillery shells is largely a symbolic gesture. But it costs a lot of money, and if this is an example of spending money on defense I'd say it's a waste. It will not improve our military capability: the West German government will not let us increase our stocks of chemical weapons there, or even replace the ones there now. Chemical weapons, unlike other weapons of war, primarily threaten civilians. You can protect soldiers against chemical weapons, but you can't adequately protect civilians. For every soldier who is likely to be a casualty of chemical weapons you will have twenty or more civilian casualties."

WHEN I looked up the newspaper accounts of alleged Soviet involvement in toxin attacks in Southeast Asia, I was able to gain a sense of the circumstances leading up to Secretary Haig's dramatic West Berlin announcement. More than a year before the speech, an article in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily* had reported on a briefing by "a senior State Department official," who had referred to "interest in some quarters" in publicizing "the possibility that the Soviets are using CW," in order to justify increased stockpiling of chemical weapons by the United States. Another consideration—this one affecting the timing of Haig's announcement—seems to have been the imminent publication of a book entitled "Yellow Rain," by Sterling Seagrave, a free-lance journalist, who had been collecting anecdotal accounts of chemical warfare and had gone to Thailand in 1979 to find out the results of the investigation being conducted by Colonel Charles Lewis and the Army medical team. Apparently on the basis of briefings by American officials, Seagrave wrote that while he was in Thailand "both Thai military intelligence and American radio monitors picked up radio intercepts from Russian and Vietnamese military trans-

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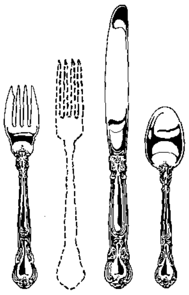

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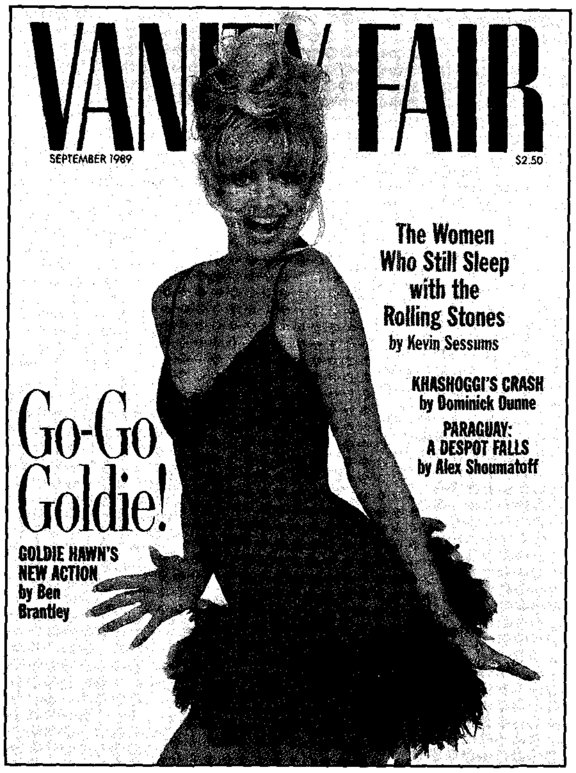
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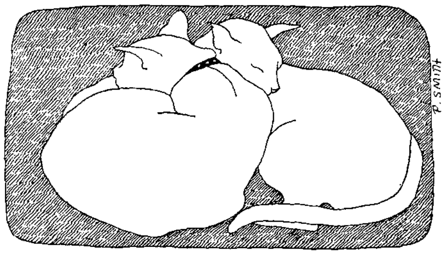
missions inside Indochina mentioning four separate chemical warfare depots," and that "one of the Thai radio intercepts, passed on to the American embassy in Bangkok, identified the Soviet Union as the source of the chemicals in the depots." Seagrave's book was due to be published on September 24, 1981, and the fact that Secretary Haig's speech was delivered days in advance of it was undoubtedly no accident.

Seagrave himself shed more light on the timing in an account in the Los Angeles *Times*, on the day before the publication of his book. He wrote that he had become aware of the "hard evidence" concerning trichothecene toxins two weeks before the State Department made the findings public. "Once the key members of the Reagan Administration were briefed, there was a triumphant impulse to go public instantly," he said. "This was a spectacular intelligence coup, potentially a major propaganda victory, and prompt publicity might save many lives." However, Seagrave continued, other officials in the government "argued, successfully, that it would be better to wait a month or two while more samples were tested and data amassed to give the announcement weight." After the decision was made "to hold the story," the national-security correspondent for *Time* "learned of the discovery of the poison [and] let the State Department know that the magazine would carry the story in the edition that hit the stands on Sept. 7." At that point, according to Seagrave, the State Department "felt it could no longer keep its findings secret, but it needed an appropriate platform for an announcement." It was then decided that Haig should reveal the discovery of the toxins to "a select group of journalists" in West Berlin. Seagrave noted, further, "Haig hoped that the revelation would help counterbalance the effect of street demonstrations against U.S. weapons policies. By showing that the Soviets were using lethal poisons, he might neutralize some of the opposition to the neutron bomb."

Indeed, since the advent of the Reagan Administration, in 1981, the government had been taking a harder and harder line on the chemical-weapons issue. Early in the year, there was talk of basing binary chemical weapons in England, in order to have them reasonably close to the potential battlefield of West Germany but still well away from the attentions of West German peace activists. On March 6th, an article in the *Times* had reported that the Administration, ready to reverse the twelve-year halt in the production of chemical weapons, had asked Congress for twenty million dollars to build a factory at the Pine Bluff Arsenal, in Arkansas, to manufacture the 155-mm. binary artillery shells. In May, Congress had passed a supplemental budget request for funding to begin equipping the factory. At the same time, the Reagan Administration appeared to critics, including those in the scientific community, to be indifferent, even hostile, toward attempts to further multinational diplomatic dialogue on the subject of chemical-arms control.

In keeping with this hard line on chemical weapons, the government pressed its case on alleged chemical attacks in Southeast Asia in increasingly authoritative fashion. On November 10, 1981, two months after Haig's speech, Richard Burt, the director of Politico-Military Affairs at the State Department (he is now the government's chief negotiator on arms control), testified before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee that "we have confirmed the use of toxin weapons" in Laos and Cambodia, and gave the subcommittee details on the assaults on the Hmong, and on their reported effects. The attacks, he said, were conducted by "low, slow-flying aircraft," which "would release a cloud, often described as yellow, sometimes orange, red, or other tints." Such clouds would descend on a village or on people in neighboring rice paddies, he said, "and seemed to be made up of small particles, which would make sounds, when falling on rooftops or vegetation, similar to that made by rain"—hence the name "yellow rain" given to it by its victims. Burt added that the effects of this yellow rain were "quick and dramatic": at first, violent itching, vomiting, dizziness, and distorted vision, and then, after a short time, vomiting of blood-tinged material, followed by discharges of large quantities of bright-red blood; within an hour, the victims would die, apparently from shock and the excessive loss of blood from the stomach. Those on the periphery of the attack, or under shelter, or those who later ate food contaminated by yellow rain, "would experience similar symptoms over a longer period," and they, too, "would often die—after a week or two of agony—of dehydration."



Burt testified that symptoms similar to those reported among the Hmong had been reported in natural outbreaks of trichothecene poisoning. "The trichothecene mycotoxins we have discovered are a highly lethal mixture," he said. Such mycotoxins did not occur naturally in Southeast Asia in the combinations identified, he asserted, but in those parts of the world where they did occur the observed effects on man and animals accorded closely with the effects described by the Hmong. Further, these toxins were not known to produce any symptoms *not* reported among victims of chemical weapons in Southeast Asia. "The fit, in other words, was perfect," Burt testified. "We had solved the mystery. We had fitted together the jigsaw puzzle . . . We now knew what was causing the bizarre and brutal deaths of Laotian and Kampuchean villagers. We had ascertained that a completely new class of weapons had been developed and was in use." In an apparent reference to the reservations of Meselson and like-minded scientists, Burt spoke with exceptional firmness of critics who would not credit such evidence "unless we produced a smoking gun—physical proof." Then he declared, "We now have that smoking gun." He said that it consisted of "four separate pieces of physical evidence," and added, "We may soon have more, as, I regret to say, chemical attacks have been reported . . . within the last month."

Burt's testimony arose from the government's intensive scientific efforts to pin down the nature of the toxins involved. By mid-1979, various government agencies were supervising the collection of samples from suspected chemical-attack sites in Southeast Asia. Analyses of these early samples for known chemical-weapons compounds were negative. It was not until July of 1981, when the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center, at Fort Detrick, Maryland, dispatched the leaf-and-stem sample from Cambodia to the laboratory of Dr. Chester Mirocha, a mycotoxin specialist at the University of Minnesota, that the original "smoking gun" was found. Dr. Mirocha tested this sample—and, subsequently, four more attack-site samples—along with a number of controls, for trichothecenes; he found various combinations of trichothecenes in all the attack-site samples and in none of the controls. Mirocha's analysis further indicated that the trichothecenes were present at levels and in combinations that, Mirocha judged, could not have occurred naturally in Southeast Asia.

Burt also testified that there was evidence of other chemical-warfare agents in use in Southeast Asia, and he told the subcommittee that the government was also addressing the question of why toxins had been used as a weapon there when other lethal agents were available. "There seem to be a variety of factors that make toxin weapons particularly effective against the rural, defenseless peoples of nations like Laos and Kampuchea," he said. "The violence of the death [and] the care with which the powder can be . . . applied to a limited area—and the survival rate of those on the periphery, who can report what they have seen—all contribute to making this type of weapon suitable for driving people from their homes and villages and insuring that they stay away." Another "attractive" attribute of such a weapon, he said, was "the difficulty in detecting and identifying the toxins."

Glen Baxter

HEINRICH COULD ALWAYS BE RELIED UPON TO SERVE COFFEE IN HIS OWN INIMITABLE STYLE.

Later on at the hearing, Matthew Meselson also testified, and was far less categorical. "I would recommend caution in concluding whether or not trichothecene mycotoxins have been used in Southeast Asia, although I agree that the preliminary evidence indicates that they have," he said. He emphasized the point that "we know very little about the normal occurrence of trichothecene mycotoxins in the tropics," and said that "we should avoid hasty assertions that the trichothecenes detected in Southeast Asia cannot be of normal occurrence."

Meselson's reservations had no discernible effect on the Reagan Administration's pursuit of the yellow-rain issue. The next move by the government took place four months later, and consisted of a special report to Congress from Secretary of State Haig. Dated March 22, 1982, it was entitled "Chemical Warfare in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan." Its tone was unequivocal, and its conclusions were sweeping. In a signed introduction, Haig informed Congress that the Geneva Protocol and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention were "in danger of being swept away by a new tide of aggression." Over the previous seven years, he wrote, "chemical and toxin weapons have been used, on an ever-widening scale, in genocidal campaigns against defenseless peoples, [and] used for precisely the reason mankind has condemned and sought to outlaw them—because of their indiscriminate action and horrific effects." His report re-stated the official position that Laotian and Vietnamese forces, operating under Soviet supervision, had employed lethal chemical and toxin weapons against Hmong tribesmen since 1976, and that since 1978 the Vietnamese had also used them in Cambodia; the report also claimed that Soviet forces had used a variety of lethal and non-lethal chemical-warfare agents, including nerve gases, in Afghanistan following the invasion of that country in December of 1979.

Concerning Laos, the Haig report cited the results of more than two hundred refugee interviews, collected by American Embassy officials in Thailand, by the Army medical team, by American physicians, by Thai officials, by journalists, and by representatives of international aid and relief organizations. According to those interviews, the toxic agents were contained in sprays, rockets, and bombs released by Soviet AN-2 crop-duster-type aircraft, by Soviet helicopters and jet aircraft, and by several American aircraft, which had presumably been captured by the Vietcong. Two hundred and sixty-one separate attacks were documented, in which six thousand five hundred and four deaths resulted. (The report added that the actual number of deaths was "almost certainly" much higher than that.) As for Cambodia, the report cited a hundred and twenty-four chemical attacks there, which were said to have caused nine hundred and eighty-one deaths, and it stated that in Afghanistan there had so far been forty-seven attacks, resulting in a claimed death toll of more than three thousand.

The report quoted a former Lao People's Liberation Army officer, a pilot who defected in 1979, as saying that he had flown captured L-19 and T-41 American aircraft which had been reëquipped to dispense toxic agents on missions against Hmong villages in the Phu Bia area. According to the defecting pilot, the Lao People's Liberation Army, in coöperation with the Vietnamese Army, had waged chemical warfare in Laos since April or early May of 1976, and in the summer of that year had launched attacks near Bouamlong, in an attempt to eliminate Hmong who were resisting Laotian Communist control. He said that late in 1976 he had often flown over the Phu Bia region for a reconnaissance of targets, accompanied by two or three Vietnamese Army staff officers and sometimes also by a Laotian staff officer. Before the actual air strikes, he said, Vietnamese or Laotian officers would review the target areas on situation maps. He would often be warned by a Laotian commander to fly at above-normal altitudes when firing rockets, to avoid hazards to the occupants of the aircraft. He said that pilots were warned to keep the operations, which were called "Extinct Destruction Operations," secret. From Lao Army staff officers he learned that the attacking aircraft were armed with two types of rockets. The report summarized the distinction: "The first, mostly 'smoke' rockets, were to be fired at targets far away from Lao and Vietnamese troops to avoid exposing them to the poison smoke. The second was of the ordinary explosive type, considered a 'close support' rocket that could be fired near Lao troop positions. Initially, the L-19 aircraft carried eight rockets—five 'close support' and three 'smoke' rockets. Later, only four rockets, mainly of the 'smoke' type, were carried." According to the pilot, the smoke rockets fired at the Hmong were unusual in that they detonated in the air; some produced white smoke mixed with blue, and others produced red smoke mixed with yellow. He said that after each of those missions he was sent to a "rest house" in Phonsavan and examined by a Lao Army doctor and nurse, and that pilots assigned to such missions were accorded special privileges, including higher flight pay. (An impressive contribution to the evidence of Soviet violations of the Geneva Protocol and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, this particular account remains even now in unqualified and unamended form in government records. However, in a January, 1981, cable from American military officials in Bangkok—a cable later obtained by colleagues of Meselson under the Freedom of Information Act—the officer responsible for debriefing the pilot commented that while the pilot did seem to have fired some kind of unconventional rocket against the Hmong, "it seems very unlikely that the rockets fired contained toxic or CW agents," since a rocket-delivered gas attack would have required the pilot to have some sort of rudimentary knowledge both of safety procedures and of prevailing winds in the target area, and the pilot apparently lacked such knowledge.)

The Haig report noted that the Laotian pilot's story had been corroborated by several accounts given by Hmong: "A village chief, for example, described attacks covering all 7 days of the week of June 5, 1976, in the Bouamlong area. He described L-19 aircraft firing rockets that produced red and green smoke: Ten villagers were killed by gas and 30 by shrapnel. Most of the H'Mong reports documented by a U.S. Foreign Service officer in June 1979 and a Department of Defense medical team in October 1979 were consistent with the pilot's testimony." The Haig report characterized as "of particular interest" the circumstances that it said surrounded the collection of samples found to contain lethal toxins. In dealing with an aerial attack said to have taken place in March of 1981 in Muong Cha, the report noted that the material was described by observers as resembling "insect spray" and sounded "like drizzling rain." The report continued, "Quite sticky at first, it soon dried to a powder." A sample of the agent, scraped from a rock by a victim, was carried to Thailand by refugees and turned over to American Embassy personnel there. And a survivor of an attack on the village of Ban Thonghak also scraped a sample of the laid-down material from a rock. According to the Haig report, the person who did the scraping developed "a severe skin rash and blisters."

The report confirmed that the symptoms of victims of the yellow-rain attacks were generally distinguishable

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from those caused by conventional chemical-warfare agents: the nausea in victims of yellow-rain attacks, unlike that produced by riot-control nausea agents, was protracted over hours, and even days; it was often accompanied by dizziness, rapid heartbeat, chest pain, loss of far-field vision, and a feeling of intense heat and burning on the skin. Many victims also told of developing, within hours after an attack, intense reddening of the eyes, bleeding gums, convulsions, and vomiting of blood. Many victims developed small blisters over exposed areas of skin. In a number of cases, victims who had been vomiting intermittently for hours following attacks would cease doing so and then, after a few minutes, develop great pain, in which, typically, "the victim would hold his abdomen and emit a gush of blood from mouth and nose." The report noted that "these individuals usually died within minutes afterward." Some of the acute signs and symptoms, but not all, resembled the effects of traditional vomiting and blister agents; moreover, the attack victims did not report symptoms—such as thick mucus, pinpoint pupils, and prolonged spasticity—associated with most known nerve agents, and environmental samples taken from sites also ruled out such traditional agents as adamsite and CS gas.

The horrifying symptoms described in the Haig report were said to correspond exactly with those known to be produced in human beings by the trichothecene group of mycotoxins. And, according to the report, the use of trichothecene toxins in chemical attacks pointed in convincing fashion to the Soviet chemical-warfare establishment. A review of scientific literature on trichothecenes had revealed "not only that these compounds had physical and chemical properties indicating potential as chemical agents but also that they were the subject of intensive investigation by Soviet scientists at institutes previously linked with chemical and biological warfare research." The report added that a Lao Army chemical section in Xiangkhoang Province had prepared "Soviet-manufactured chemical items for inspection by a Soviet military team on February 7, 1979," and "a seven-man team of Soviet chemical artillery experts, accompanied by Lao chemical officers, inspected chemical supplies and artillery rounds" at Savannakhet, on June 1, 1979. Several Lao defectors had "reported seeing Soviet advisers present when aircraft were loaded with chemical-agent rockets."

THE Haig report to Congress and its implications were accorded prominent attention in the American and overseas press. On March 23rd, the *Times* gave the story front-page treatment and devoted two inside pages to extensive excerpts from the report along with a carryover of the lead article. The Washington *Post* also ran the story on page 1, although it did not publish extensive excerpts from the report. The *Wall Street Journal* ran a piece that dealt with possible consequences of the report on arms-control negotiations between the superpowers. "Mounting evidence that the Soviets are violating treaties banning chemical and biological warfare is certain to complicate future U.S.-Soviet talks on strategic arms reductions," the writer, Karen Elliott House, began, and she quoted Richard Burt as saying that "we must obviously insist that any new arms control agreement contain measures which ensure strict verification, and guarantee that questions of compliance are dealt with seriously." House continued, "Verification, never an easy task because the Soviets object to on-site inspection, has taken on great importance to the Reagan administration, whose distrust of the Soviets is deep. Emerging details of Soviet violations of a 1925 Geneva protocol banning chemical weapons and a 1971 [sic] biological weapons convention have stiffened the administration's resolve to insist on adequate verification in future START negotiations."

The Haig report and the press accounts and discussions of it apparently made a considerable impact on a great many people, including some not readily swayed by charges of atrocious military conduct no matter how authoritatively presented. An article in the *Times*, by Philip M. Boffey, stated, "A number of scientists and military specialists say the circumstantial evidence that chemical warfare is being waged in Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan is becoming increasingly persuasive. They also say the Soviet Union appears to be involved." But, Boffey added, "there is disagreement over how lethal the chemicals are and over the degree of Soviet complicity." The article also quoted Meselson—as a scientist known to be critical of the previous evidence of chemical-weapons attacks—as saying that he was "impressed by the volume of human testimony," and that, while it was not "rigorous proof," he was "pretty convinced that some kind of chemical warfare is going on."

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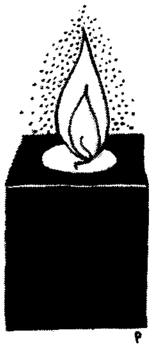
Meanwhile, the State Department saw to it that the Haig report was submitted to the United Nations, and dispatched an eight-member team of officials and technical experts, of whom several had contributed to the writing of the report, to major world capitals, among them Brussels—where officials at NATO headquarters were briefed on the allegations—and Beijing. The reaction of the Soviet government to the American charges was vehement. Soviet press organs denounced the Haig report as a libellous document, and a TASS commentary called it "dirty lies." The Soviet Union's Ambassador to the United Nations addressed an open letter to the U.N. Secretary-General containing a critique "prepared by experts from the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Health, and other competent Soviet organizations" which characterized the American charges as "totally without substance." In fact, he declared, the Haig report constituted "a malicious fabrication" that was "intended to divert attention" from chemical-warfare campaigns waged by the United States against the people of Southeast Asia; from the large-scale production of chemical weapons of its own; and from its reluctance to engage in serious negotiations on the international prohibition of chemical weapons. The Soviet reply consisted in part of a lengthy analysis of the American anecdotal and toxicological evidence, followed by a series of countercharges against the United States, detailing "criminal acts" of chemical warfare during the

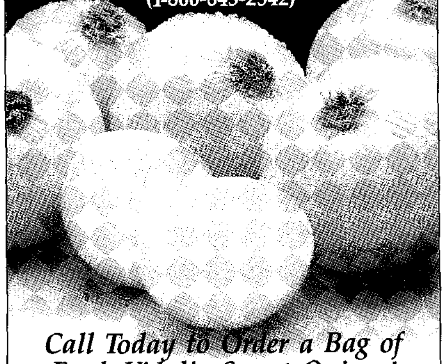
Vietnam War and the subsequent "irremediable damage" to the health of the Vietnamese population, including the births of deformed infants. It was charged that the herbicidal campaign waged by the United States in Vietnam may have been deliberately intended to bring about, among other things, a radical change in the Vietnamese ecological balance, since non-native species of plant life, including "elephant grass brought from the United States," had sprouted in defoliated areas and had encouraged the spread of Fusarium spores. Carried by seasonal winds into parts of Laos and Cambodia, the spores would have brought about the production and spread of trichothecene toxins and other mycotoxins in those areas. Such circumstances "reveal the hidden truth of who was really responsible for the mycotoxicoses in South-East Asia," the Soviet reply concluded. "The military leaders of the United States are the true guilty parties."



On June 17, 1982, President Reagan, in a speech at the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament, accused the Soviets of supplying and using chemical weapons in Southeast Asia and in Afghanistan, in violation both of the Geneva Protocol and of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. On November 22nd, the U.N. issued its own report on chemical-weapons use; the report supported charges that some sort of chemical weapons had been used in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia but found no proof that mycotoxins were used in Southeast Asia—nor any evidence for the Soviet "elephant grass" charge. On November 29th, George Shultz, who had succeeded Haig as Secretary of State, transmitted a report entitled "Chemical Warfare in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan: An Update" to Congress and the United Nations. The new report asserted that Vietnamese and Laotian troops, "under direct Soviet supervision," had continued to use lethal and incapacitating chemical agents and toxins against the Hmong in Laos and against resistance forces in Cambodia through June of that year, and that available accounts from Afghanistan reinforced "the previous judgment" that such agents were also used on resistance troops there. Trichothecene toxins had been found in the urine, blood, and tissues of the victims of yellow-rain attacks in Laos and Cambodia, the Shultz report said, and continued to be found in samples of residue collected after attacks, and Soviet involvement was "a common factor in the evidence." Two Soviet gas masks were found in Afghanistan; one of them was said to be contaminated with trichothecene mycotoxins.

The publication of the updated report was made the occasion of official press briefings, one held the same day, at the State Department, and the other on the following day, at the headquarters of the United States Information Agency. Both briefings were presided over by Robert Dean, the State Department deputy director of Politico-Military Affairs, and attended by various political and technical experts, including Dr. Sharon Watson, a toxicologist with the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center, and Gary Crocker, a senior State Department intelligence analyst. Crocker told the assembled journalists that analysis of the yellow-rain residue showed it to contain a number of compounds in addition to the trichothecenes. "It contains pollen," he said, "and not wind-borne pollen, but pollen that would be commercially collected, or is collected, if you will, by insects—the type of thing . . . a honeybee would take from flowers." The pollen grains, he said, were "the particular size . . . the right size" to be retained in the body. "We think the toxin is on the pollen, and the pollen penetrates into the body," he said, adding that government analysts were not yet sure of the nature of the solvent in yellow rain—"the liquid material that makes it a sticky substance that allows it to penetrate through the skin."

Dr. Watson undertook to clarify the role of pollen in yellow rain. "The agent as it comes down is wet," she explained, "and at this time the primary exposure appears to be through the skin, and the toxins are dissolved in the solvent, going through the skin very quickly." But, she suggested, as the agent, once deposited, dried out, "a secondary aerosol effect can be caused by kicking up this pollenlike dust that is of a particle size that will be retained in the bronchi of the lung," where it would prove to be "very toxic." The



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two different ways in which the compound could be absorbed, Dr. Watson said, made the yellow rain "a very clever, clever mixture."

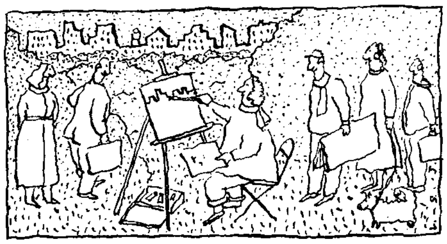
It was British scientists at the Chemical Defence Establishment, at Porton Down, who had first found pollen in yellow rain, after testing some samples in January, 1982. The British scientists found no trichothecenes in the samples, and an article in the July, 1986, issue of *Chemistry in Britain* quotes a source in the Ministry of Defence as saying that after learning of the negative results British authorities took the unusual step of auditing the Porton scientists' analytical techniques. The audit amounted to a clean bill for the competence of the Porton analysts, but, according to the *Chemistry in Britain* article, the British Ministry of Defence withheld publication of the negative results—"apparently out of a desire not to upset the Americans."

Similarly, late in 1982, the United States Army's Chemical Systems Laboratory, at Edgewood Arsenal, in Maryland, using a new and refined means of analysis, would begin examining more than eighty samples, including one that had been reported by Dr. Mirocha's laboratory as containing particularly high levels of trichothecenes; the C.S.L. found no traces of any trichothecenes in this or any of the other samples. Dr. Mirocha's findings were duplicated only by Dr. Joseph Rosen, a professor of chemistry at Rutgers University, who in December of 1981 detected trichothecenes in a yellow-rain sample brought back from Laos by a television crew from ABC. Dr. Rosen also claimed to have found traces of a man-made substance—polyethylene glycol—in his sample. This assertion dovetailed with State Department charges that the pollen itself was merely an element in a man-made mixture—an element meant to act as a vehicle for the lethal mycotoxins.

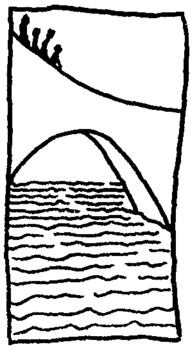
In February of 1983, Vice-President George Bush notified the Geneva disarmament conference that the United States wanted a "comprehensive chemical-weapons treaty," and that it would soon submit "detailed views on the content of a convention we believe could effectively eliminate the chemical-weapons threat." A week later, these views were submitted, but in the same week Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, testifying before Congress about the Department's needs for fiscal 1984 (he asked for a hundred and forty million dollars to begin production of binary artillery shells and bombs), declared that "the Soviet Union has made massive investments in chemical-warfare capabilities," and warned that what he called "the current extreme imbalance" in chemical-weapons capabilities between the United States and the Soviet Union "could have catastrophic consequences."

SOME time after these events, I had occasion to visit Matthew Meselson again, at Harvard. He told me that when he read the transcripts of the November, 1982, State Department press briefings and came to the discussion of pollen his "intuitive feeling" was that the yellow deposits must be a natural phenomenon. Shortly thereafter, he said, he got hold of some yellow-rain deposits of his own, as a result of having come across, in an article in a Thai hospital journal, the name of a Canadian government scientist who had been sent yellow-rain residues acquired by the Canadian Embassy in Bangkok. Meselson had written to the scientist, who obtained permission to send him small samples of the deposits—samples consisting of yellow spots on small brown pebbles and on the upper surface of leaves. Some Canadian researchers had reported that the Hmong had spoken of the spots as "congealed deposits" and "yellow sticky material"; these descriptions caused Meselson to suspect that Dr. Sharon Watson's explanation of the function of pollen in the material was impossible. Now that he had his own deposits, Meselson tried to get some of the samples to turn into the "pollenlike dust"—the micron-size particles capable of penetrating the skin and bronchial passages—that Watson had referred to. He concluded that "there was no way of these deposits' being inhalable unless you could have had an explosion to blow them up."

Early in 1983, Meselson travelled to Geneva to give a talk in memory of a late scientific colleague, and he took his yellow-rain samples with him, having decided to stop in Paris on his way home to discuss their composition with scientists there. "I'd been very interested in the natural history of Indo-China, because of the work I'd done on herbicides," he told me, "so I thought that in Paris I would try to introduce myself to some of the old French-colonial biologists, because they were people who really knew Southeast Asia. The French had a lot of good scientists over there." On an earlier trip to Paris, Meselson had met a French expert on the floral ecology of Southeast Asia named Jules Vidal, and in Paris he looked Vidal up, at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. At the museum, Meselson knew, there was a laboratory specializing in the pollen of Southeast Asia. Vidal introduced him to the pollen experts there, who, Meselson said, "generously spent a day with me trying to identify those pollens." However, the microscope slides that Meselson had with him had not been prepared so as to make the pollen on them visible from the angles necessary for proper identification. "The long and short of it was they couldn't identify the pollen on the slides," Meselson said. But he did receive much useful background on prevailing ecological conditions in Southeast Asia, and he returned to Harvard determined to pursue the mystery of the pollen contained in the samples.



When I asked Meselson about his subsequent researches, he waved a hand toward the windows of the room we were in—a seminar room near his office—to indicate various buildings across the way. "You have to realize what this place is like," he told me. "Right over there is the Yenching Library, containing the largest collection of Chinese books and journals in the United States; it has several levels underground. Then over there"—he pointed out a sprawling red brick building of Edwardian appearance—"are the Biological Laboratories, in which you have specialists on the social insects—ants, bees, termites, and so on. And over here"—gesturing again—"you have the Farlow Museum, which is a laboratory and museum dedicated solely to fungi. And next to that is the Harvard herbarium, one of the greatest in the world, in which you can find samples of nearly every species of plant that's known. And over there"—pointing beyond the herbarium—"you have the Museum of Comparative Zoology, containing insect specimens from all over the world, including Southeast Asia. And, again, there are the Peabody Museum and the Tozzer Library, where, if you are interested in the Hmong, you can look up all kinds of naturalists' books and drawings and field notes about these people. Then over there we have the Department of Chemistry, which has the analytical facilities and the knowledge to undertake the chemical analysis of trichothecenes by mass spectroscopy. And down by the river there are people, at the John F. Kennedy School, who have connections with government. Altogether, I think, you have available a resource that exceeds in intellectual power anything the government itself possesses."



Meselson's first move following his return from Paris was to call on Richard Howard, an eminent tropical botanist and a former director of Harvard's Arnold Arboretum. "I asked Dick who the really good pollen experts in this country were, and he gave me some names," Meselson said. "He told me, 'Probably the best one for what you're working on is Joan Nowicke, at the Smithsonian Institution.' " So, after telephoning Dr. Nowicke, Meselson went down to Washington to see her, taking along his yellow-rain samples, and explained to her his problem of sorting out and identifying their pollen content. From his own microscopic examination he had calculated that each spot contained about a million pollen grains, but he had no way of determining the origin of the material. He was hopeful that she might be able to pin down at least some of the plant families represented: "Would you be getting plants that grow in the water? Edible or nonedible? Commercially used or noncommercial? Could the pollen originate with Russian birch trees—something that might implicate the Russians?" Dr. Nowicke told Meselson that, as it happened, she had already been visited by Army research people, who had brought her some scanning electron micrographs of their samples, but although she could see that the samples had a high pollen content, she had been unable to identify, simply from the micrographs, the probable source or sources of the pollen grains. She looked at a slide of his yellow-rain material—she had mounted it so as to make possible a more effective examination than the one made in Paris—under a light microscope, but kept her thoughts to herself. "Joan said nothing—she's very cautious," Meselson said. He left the samples with her to work on at her convenience.

In the month following her meeting with Meselson, Dr. Nowicke went to work on the samples that he had handed her, comparing them with pollen samples stored in the Smithsonian's vast herbarium, which contains nearly four million dried specimens of plants from all over the world. She soon realized that although there appeared to be wind-borne pollen in the samples, most of the pollen consisted overwhelmingly of types usually carried by insects. She was also surprised to find that the pollen content of the spots was extremely variegated. This diversity was so great that two yellow-rain spots on the same leaf would have different pollen mixtures; indeed, no two spots she studied appeared to have identical mixtures of pollen types. (She later remarked to me that if the Russians had in fact been responsible for the yellow-rain attacks they must have had to use a variety of nozzles and other spray equipment to achieve such an extraordinary effect.) She happened to have just finished writing a paper on the varieties of pollen in Dilleniaceae, which is a family of flowering trees indigenous to Southeast Asia, and on which she is reckoned to be an expert; she was fairly certain that she could detect pollen belonging to *Dillenia*, a genus of Dilleniaceae.

Meanwhile, Meselson and two colleagues—the economist Carl Kaysen, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stuart J. D. Schwartzstein, who had organized a group at the Tufts Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis to investigate the yellow-rain controversy—began organizing a conference on the scientific basis for the evidence that yellow rain was involved in chemical-weapons attacks. Schwartzstein's role was to represent the political aspects of the issue; he proved to be what Meselson termed "a great crusader" in support of the official United States position. The conference took place at Cambridge in

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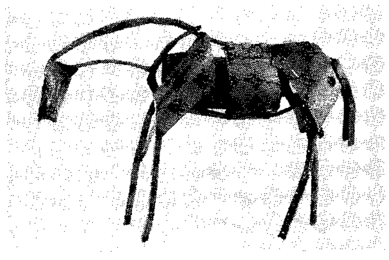

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April of 1983, and the participants included experts (Joan Nowicke among them) on anthropology, chemical warfare, chemistry, medicine, and tropical botany, and representatives from the Army and the State Department. One of the participants was Dr. Peter Ashton, a Harvard botanist and the director of the Arnold Arboretum. During the conference, Ashton looked at the list of plant families thus far tied to the pollen samples and, as Meselson recalls it, said, "Well, first, all the plants are particularly common in Southeast Asia, and, second, they're all visited by bees. So I think it"—the material in the samples—"has something to do with bees." But the bee connection was something of a puzzle. At one point, there was discussion of the possibility that the deposits were bee vomit: that bees—conceivably because they had been affected by disease or by a toxic chemical substance—had regurgitated the pollen-laden material found in the yellow spots. And if the yellow spots had to do with bees, which kind of bees?

"There are twenty thousand different species of bees," Meselson told me, "and the ones that Peter said he knew most about were little bitty bees, the Meliponini, which pollinate big trees in the tropics." Most of the plant families linked to the pollen, however, were relatively small flowering trees, so Dr. Ashton decided to get in touch with Thomas Seeley, a former junior fellow at Harvard who was then an assistant professor of biology at Yale and a bee specialist. While Dr. Seeley was at Harvard, he had taken nine months off from his academic work to go to Thailand and study bees there. Ashton and Meselson telephoned Seeley after the conference and described the yellow spots in Meselson's samples. Seeley replied immediately that the spots might be bee droppings. He explained that bees—at least, those indigenous to climates with cold winters—are confined to their nests for the winter and, on the advent of warmer weather, take part in what are known as mass cleansing flights. In those flights, the bees release waste matter that has built up in their abdomens during their winter confinement. Seeley said that traces of such mass cleansing flights could often be seen on the ground and on vegetation in the vicinity of bees' nests, in the form of yellow spots. But the question of whether bees in a tropical climate would behave this way was unclear, he said, and needed investigation.

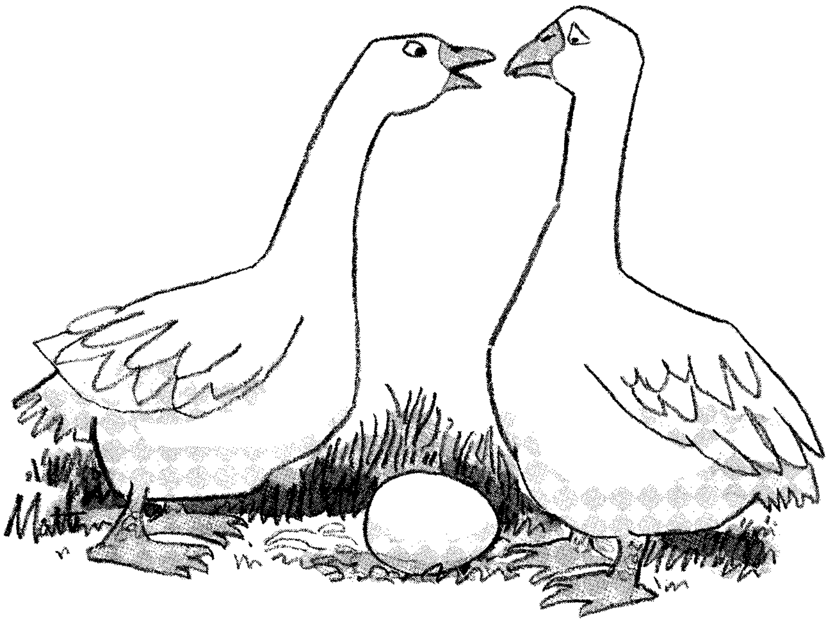
Later that night, Ashton went out into his yard, where he had often seen bees, and he found some yellow spots that resembled Meselson's yellow-rain samples. He phoned Meselson the next morning to tell him of the discovery. Meselson, remembering that the Museum of Comparative Zoology had a nest of honeybees on its roof, walked over to the museum's visitors' parking lot; the front and rear windows of cars parked there, he reasoned, might be likely recipients of bee droppings and a convenient collecting site. Sure enough, he found a number of yellow spots on the windows of several cars. (Bees had been particularly active in the Cambridge area that April, he told me, and he thinks that is why he and Ashton found the spots so quickly.)

Several days later, Meselson had dinner with the Harvard entomologists Edward O. Wilson and Carroll Williams. "I had with me some of these samples in a petri dish, and I said, 'What do you think these are?' " he recalled. "They told me they didn't know. But, as it turned out, Ed's secretary knew. If visitors to the M.C.Z. had any complaints about parking problems, it was one of her jobs to help out. And visitors were complaining that they'd come to visit the museum in their new cars and they found all these spots on their cars. And they wanted to know what could be done about it. She found out what the spots really were from one of the graduate students, who told her they were bee droppings."

Meselson telephoned Dr. Nowicke and told her that the yellow-rain samples might be bee droppings, and that a lot of bee droppings were apparently being found around the parking spaces near the M.C.Z. The research facilities at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History include a working beehive on the roof, and several days later, when Meselson went to Washington, he and Nowicke looked around the museum's lot and discovered that Nowicke's own car, a Volkswagen station wagon, was covered with yellow spots. Dr. Nowicke scraped off several for microscopic examination and found that all of them, like the samples of yellow rain she had seen, had a very high pollen content.

Meselson showed me a number of electron micrographs of pollen grains found both in the yellow-rain samples and in the bee droppings that Meselson had collected from the cars parked next to the Museum of Comparative Zoology. The grains stood out sharply, with an almost three-dimensional quality. They looked to me like a jumble of miniature shells of different shapes and sizes. Some resembled tiny particles of pitted coral; others were smooth; and there were others that reminded me of the displays of dried pasta in a pasta store in Greenwich Village that I often go to—cavatelli, conchiglie, maruzzine, lumachine, and the rest. "There's an intricacy that's astonishing," Meselson remarked. "Nobody understands why, but there must be a reason, because anything involved in sexual reproduction—and the pollen grains are the sperm of the plants from which they come—is under tremendous selective pressure, so there's *got* to be a selective reason for the intricacy you see here. I think what we had at the back of our minds at the time of our Cambridge conference was that yellow rain couldn't be feces, because there would be nothing left in feces that looked like pollen. But it turns out that the characteristic beautiful shape of the pollen that you've just seen is imposed on the pollen grain by a shell called an exine, which is made of stuff like cellulose and is tough and indigestible by the bee. So that when the bee has digested the contents of the pollen grain—the protein and fats—what's left still looks like pollen grains."

The next step in his collaboration with Nowicke, Meselson told me, was their joint participation—along with Ashton, Seeley, and Julian Perry Robinson, the chemical-weapons expert from the University of Sussex—on a panel during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Detroit, at the end of May, 1983. At the A.A.A.S. meeting, the panel advanced what Meselson said was "a strong hypothesis" that what was known as yellow rain was actually a natural phenomenon. Meselson and his colleagues dis-



*"There, there—a silver egg is no small achievement."*

tributed a statement describing the similarities—in color, pollen density, and size of spots—between yellow-rain samples obtained from Southeast Asia and the droppings of honeybees around Harvard that spring. They pointed out that the pollen in the samples from Southeast Asia came from diverse families of plants—families that were common in Southeast Asia and were known to be visited by bees. They noted the presence of bee hairs in both groups of samples. "It is possible that yellow rain is bee excrement," the statement concluded.

Meselson acknowledged at the session that the bee theory of yellow rain did not explain why mycotoxins had been found in certain yellow-rain samples and in the blood, urine, and tissues of some people who said they had been victims of yellow-rain attacks, but he suggested that the mycotoxins could have been the product of natural processes in the Southeast Asian environment; for example, Fusarium fungal molds could have grown on the yellow spots, thus producing the toxins. Dr. Ashton, for his part, conceded that there were still a number of unresolved questions, including the problem of whether mass cleansing flights took place in the tropics. "We cannot exclude the possibility that a side-product of some chemical used in Southeast Asia has affected both people and bees," he continued. "But what we do have is very persuasive evidence that the best explanation of the yellow rain is bee excrement." And Dr. Seeley commented, "We are not saying that chemical warfare is not going on. We are saying that we are going down the wrong alley if we focus on the yellow spots."

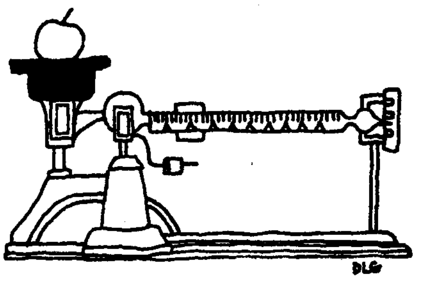
The suggestions of Meselson and his colleagues were widely reported in the press. So were the reactions of United States government officials, and many of those reactions were openly contemptuous of the theory. At the State Department, Alan Romberg, the Department's deputy spokesman, ridiculed what he referred to as "the great bee caper," and declared that "the hypothesis that 'yellow rain'—trichothecene mycotoxins—may be a natural phenomenon has in fact been exhaustively studied, and subsequently rejected, by responsible and qualified scientists in and out of government." The sites of the reported occurrence of yellow rain were clearly limited to war zones, he said, and one sample droplet in which trichothecene toxin was found weighed three hundred milligrams, which was "certainly more than a bee could drop." He noted, further, that "the level of toxin causing immediate and often fatal effects on humans is certainly sufficient to kill a bee, [which] could not survive to excrete the toxin," and he maintained that a large body of evidence, ranging from eyewitness accounts to autopsy reports of chemical-attack victims and information from intelligence sources, provided "persuasive and incriminating data" to show that "toxins are being used as weapons."

By this time, the Reagan Administration seemed intent on placing long-range chemical weapons in Europe to counter the perceived Soviet threat. General B. W. Rogers, the Supreme Commander of NATO, had asserted before one Senate subcommittee, "It is more important to me to have the modern adequate chemical capability to retaliate than the neutron weapon." In such hearings, a binary nerve-gas bomb dubbed the Bigeye was repeatedly referred to as an important "deep strike" weapon, even though it was recognized that actual deployment of this weapon could not take place for a number of years. And various articles in the press, as well as published think-tank background papers, dealt with the threat represented by the yellow-rain attacks in such a way as to favor the development of binary nerve-gas weapons as an appropriate response. As for the activities of the Administration itself, its representatives engaged in lobbying that Julian Perry Robinson has described as being of "unprecedented intensity," in their attempts to persuade Congress to pass legislation authorizing and funding full-scale production of the new binary nerve-gas munitions.

ALL during 1983, the action on the chemical-weapons issue in committees and on the floor of an often divided Congress involved much confused pushing and pulling. In June, the House rejected a bill that would have funded development of the binary artillery shells and the Bigeye bomb. In July, on the Senate floor, the vote on the issue was tied, only to be broken in favor of authorization of the program by a vote cast by Vice-President Bush. In August, the funding was included in the defense appropriation during a House-Senate conference, and in September both houses of Congress passed an authorization bill for production of binary chemical weapons. But in October the House, after considering a bill to reauthorize specific funding for the program, voted it down, while in the Senate, in November, a similar bill passed only after Vice-President Bush again broke a tie vote on the floor. To the Administration's disappointment, the funding authorization did not survive a second House-Senate conference.

The Reagan Administration's sense of frustration was exacerbated by a Special National Intelligence Estimate put together by William Casey, the director of the C.I.A., in September, 1983, in consultation with the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and other intelligence arms of the government. Although the report was stamped both "Secret" and "NOFORN" (a bureaucratic acronym meaning "not releasable to foreign nationals"), copies of it eventually found their way through leaks—quite possibly initiated by Washington with the aim of needling the Thatcher Government into giving public support to the American denunciation of the alleged Soviet role in yellow-rain attacks—into nongovernmental hands in Britain. Parts of the Special National Intelligence Estimate were summarized in an October, 1984, issue of *Foreign Report*, a limited-circulation newsletter on foreign affairs published by *The Economist*, and a somewhat more detailed summary of the conclusions reached in the document was contained in a contribution by Julian Perry Robinson to the 1985 yearbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. According to *Foreign Report*, the C.I.A. document stated that whereas evidence of Soviet culpability "has been steadily strengthened by confirmatory reporting and analysis . . . West European and other governments and publics have widely resisted fully accepting the published evidence," and it complained that although America's NATO allies were well aware that the Soviets could employ yellow-rain warfare in Europe, "constraints at the political level of NATO governments" had "sharply inhibited serious action" on the issue. According to Dr. Perry Robinson's summary, Casey had informed the President that the French government had independently acquired evidence that supported the American allegations, but had chosen not to release the information, in order to avoid divisive political controversy; that the West German government had acquired similar evidence but was also withholding it from the public; and that the British government, while supporting the American position, was reluctant to comment publicly on the available evidence—all this in the face of glaring Western deficiencies in offensive and defensive chemical weapons, and in the face of the reality that heavy Soviet use of chemical weapons in a surprise attack could breach NATO defenses and allow the rapid advance that, in the belief of the Soviet leadership, would be necessary for victory in a short war in Europe.

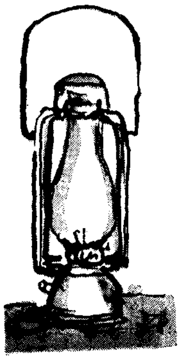
While all the political maneuvering was going on in Congress and in the Reagan Administration's relations with its European allies, Matthew Meselson continued to advance his hypothesis. He had collected a good deal of additional information about the effects of the spring cleansing flights of domestic honeybees; all sorts of people familiar with the behavior of bees and the beekeeping business were getting in touch with him on the subject of bee droppings. From some of them Meselson learned of several civil lawsuits in this country concerning the cleansing flights of bees. Those bringing such suits included the owners of commercial laundries whose laundry was hung in the open air to dry; the laundry would develop yellow spots, which the laundry owners charged came from nearby commercial beekeeping facilities. Meselson also remembers a telephone call from a representative of the Environmental Protection Agency, who informed him that for some time the E.P.A. had been receiving complaints from a company in Delaware that was making expensive yachts. "The company was complaining about yellow deposits that were making little blemishes on new paint put on the yachts," Meselson said. "The company couldn't cover the yachts very easily with protective sheets, and they were having to repaint the whole yacht, which they found very expensive. The company complained that it must be industrial pollution. Then, after the A.A.A.S. meeting, the E.P.A. people, when they read about the bee pollen, said, 'Maybe it isn't a matter of industrial pollution; let's call Meselson.' And they called me. I said, 'It sounds like bee droppings to me.' And that's what it turned out to be."



The connection in Meselson's mind between the mass cleansing flights of honeybees and the yellow-rain deposits was strengthened in the fall of 1983, when a Princeton graduate student named Fred Dyer, who was studying bees in India, sent him some specimen droppings of Southeast Asian bees. Meselson told me about this in the course of showing me around rows of plant-and-pollen specimens in the Harvard herbarium. "Do you know what the singular is of the word 'feces'?" he asked me. "And do you know who told me? Linus Pauling." Meselson had done his graduate work in chemistry under Pauling at the California Institute of Technology. "After I told him about Fred Dyer and the feces samples from India, Linus, who always has a way of knowing more about something than anybody else, smiled and said, 'Well, Matt, I assume you know that the singular of feces is *faex*.' Anyway, when we got the samples from Dyer, we measured the diameters of the spots, the weight of each spot, and the number of pollen grains per unit of weight, and we measured the color spectrum. And in these respects the yellow spots from the parking lot, the yellow-rain samples from Southeast Asia, and the bee droppings from India were indistinguishable." Meselson added that it is now known that whether bees making the spots are of big or little varieties the spots are all of about the same size—"that's determined by the physics of the nozzle out of which the stuff is ejected."

Meselson's developing position on yellow rain was subjected to hostile commentary not only from government spokesmen but also in certain sectors of the press—notably the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. On June 6, 1983, in the unsigned "Review & Outlook" column, the *Journal* asserted that the fact that the yellow-rain sample analyzed in Dr. Joseph Rosen's laboratory contained "other substances" (presumably pollen) besides mycotoxins "does not make the mycotoxins go away," and suggested that Meselson's efforts "to keep alive some grounds for reasonable doubt have become a parody of themselves." The *Journal* declared that it was "time for the debate to move on to the next and still debatable question—whether these treaty violations mean that the pursuit of arms agreements with the present

Soviet leadership has reached a dead end." By the following February, the *Journal* was announcing flatly that "among men of affairs the 'yellow rain' debate is closed." In another "Review & Outlook" essay, it charged that the government's case on chemical-weapon attacks was being subjected to "double standards" by Meselson and his associates, who, it said, had rejected the government's allegations because the yellow-rain samples would not "withstand the scrutiny of a dissertation committee," whereas "Prof. Meselson's bee theory, by contrast, is credible because the government has not offered evidence sufficient to *disprove* it." (The *Journal's* italics.) And the commentary concluded:



> The byways of science can sometimes serve those who seek to ward off unwelcome conclusions. There is always some new standard of evidence to demand, some new hypothesis yet untested . . . This is an abuse of science against which scientists should guard, or men of affairs will start to wonder whether science can help us when we have to decide important questions of public policy.

However, Meselson was gaining increased support from various scientific journals, including *Science*, the publication of the A.A.A.S.; the British journal *Nature;* and *Chemical & Engineering News*, a weekly publication of the American Chemical Society. In January, 1984, *Chemical & Engineering News* devoted nearly a whole issue to an article about the yellow-rain phenomenon. The article contained a lengthy review of the evidence thus far concerning the government's allegations, and was accompanied by tables giving the comparable toxin content of the five yellow-rain samples that had tested positive in Dr. Mirocha's laboratory at the University of Minnesota (the level was shown to vary greatly) and the results of the biomedical tests, also carried out in Dr. Mirocha's laboratory, of blood, urine, and tissue samples taken from alleged victims. All of the biomedical samples showed trace amounts of trichothecenes, but only one of them, the article noted, had subsequently been tested in another laboratory; results there had not been released. The article noted, further, the negative findings made by the Army's Chemical Systems Laboratory. It was also critical of the interviews that the various government representatives had conducted with Hmong tribespeople in refugee camps in Thailand, pointing out that the questions seemed based on the presumption that the Hmong were indeed victims of attacks. An editorial in the same issue, while conceding the difficulty of obtaining physical evidence of chemical warfare from remote and war-torn areas, said that this did not explain why the scientific case the government put forward on the yellow-rain issue had been so poorly presented.

Although Meselson was heartened by these signs of support from within the scientific community, he knew that he needed further information to construct a proper bee theory. One particular problem was the uncertainty over whether Asian honeybees engaged in the sort of mass flights that would scatter pollen-laden droppings on the terrain. "Various people who were not at all unsympathetic to our initial idea said to us, 'It's wrong, because in the tropics there would be no cleansing showers,' " Meselson told me. "And, indeed, I had pored over the literature on bees and I could find nothing about cleansing showers in the tropics. On the other hand, I could find only about four papers on the cleansing flights of bees in the temperate zones."

To resolve this problem, he decided to make a field trip to Southeast Asia and examine for himself the flight behavior of Asian bees. The best place for him to go, of course, would have been the sites of reported chemical attacks in Laos, but he knew that that prospect was made most unlikely by the attitude of the Laotian authorities: they had adamantly refused permission to the United Nations team charged with investigating the allegations. However, in February, 1984, Meselson received a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; as a result, he was able to travel to Southeast Asia and further his investigation of the bee theory he had developed as an alternative explanation to the official accounts of toxin-weapon attacks being put forward by the State and Defense Departments and by the President himself.

—THOMAS WHITESIDE

*(This is the first part of a two-part article.)*

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# THE THEATRE

## *Point Blank*

THERE'S something Ozymandias-like about "Assassins," and the way it arrived at Playwrights Horizons. For weeks, it's been common knowledge that the show—which has music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, direction by Jerry Zaks, orchestration by Paul Gemignani, a book by John Weidman (who collaborated with Sondheim on "Pacific Overtures"), an all-star design team (Paul Gallo, William Ivey Long, and Loren Sherman), and a cast that includes Victor Garber, Jonathan Hadary, and Terrence Mann—is sold out for every performance of its extremely limited run at the raisin-box-size theatre; and the way people involved with the show carried on about it had a quality of "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" A notice posted outside the box office tells you at great length and in very serious-looking type what the procedures for getting standby tickets are, and the woman I talked to when I called the box office to ask "what time the Sondheim lets out" seemed to feel that I hadn't spoken of the work with sufficient respect. "Assassins," she corrected me sternly—as though she were saying "Faust."

But almost everyone will have heard by now that the Sondheim isn't quite all that the mystique cracked it up to be. Actually, it's considerably worse. Moreover, what's wrong with it goes beyond what one has come to think of as Sondheim's chronic second-act problem. Starting with the opening sight gag—a funfair shooting gallery ("HIT THE 'PREZ' AND WIN A PRIZE")—and going straight through to the embarrassing climax (which has John Wilkes Booth quoting "Death of a Salesman" to Lee Harvey Oswald, and the spirits of assassins past and future not only converging on the Texas School Book Depository for the purpose of egging Oswald on but actually supplying him with a long-range rifle), everything about the show is predictable, familiar, or inane. America is supposed to be the land of opportunity, but some people, on discovering that it isn't, go crazy and become celebrity-murderers: so runs the show's thesis. It's not a very interesting idea, and Sondheim hasn't managed to put any spin on it.

Given the nature of Sondheim's interests and his gift for the panoramic, what one expected from this musical—which was presumably born of Sondheim's sense of his generation's having been shaped by the Presidential assassination of 1963—was a historical and cultural mosaic held together by verbal and musical motif and by Sondheim's offbeat, cynical vision. Instead, what we're given is a high-school pageant. Weidman's book offers little information on the individuals it claims to be about, other than some cursory facts noted on a crib sheet handed out with the Playbill. There are portraits of Booth (Mr. Garber) as failed actor and jealous brother (a joke about bad reviews is repeated over and over), and of John Hinckley (Greg Germann) and Squeaky Fromme (Annie Golden) as misguided hero-worshippers. There are pratfalls involving Gerald Ford (for the simple) and in-jokes about Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story" score (for the sophisticated), and (for the truly thoughtful) there's a song about gun control which is called "Gun Song."

It's an index of the half-baked nature of the score that most of the songs (there are only eight; the show lasts ninety minutes, without intermission) have non-titles, because they have no point. They're called simply "The Ballad of Booth," "The Ballad of Czolgosz" (McKinley's assassin, played by Mr. Mann), and "The Ballad of Guiteau" (Garfield's, played by Mr. Hadary). These are sung or led by a footloose Balladeer, Patrick Cassidy, wearing overalls and a Greek fisherman's cap—who knows why? A puerile ditty called "How I Saved Roosevelt" makes the point that eyewitness accounts of historical events tend to be self-glorifying and conflicting. But cleverness—the main thing we have come to expect from Sondheim (along with a certain amount of self-indulgence and sentimentality)—is lacking. There's no structure, no conceit—nothing tying together this hodgepodge of only superficially connected incidents.

The mistake seems to have been to try to use popular-song forms to tell stories from history. We learn nothing about John Hinckley or Squeaky Fromme by having them sing a soft-rock love duet addressed (by him) to Jodie Foster and (by her) to Charles Manson. People talk and talk and talk, and you think, When are they going to sing? And then

they do, and you think, Why did they bother? (Most of the songs sound like self-parody—a whiff of the opening number from "Merrily We Roll Along" here, a riff from one of Cinderella's songs in "Into the Woods" there.) The one or two things that make you laugh are the result of Zaks' comic flair. It's the script's fault, not his, that actors like Mr. Mann and Lyn Greene (who does a turn as Emma Goldman, if you can believe it) are reduced to playing cartoon foreigners, open-mouthed and slow of speech. Poor Mr. Garber—stuck with playing Booth, who speaks almost entirely in clichés—acquits himself with characteristic dignity. Mr. Hadary, as Guiteau, has a refreshingly antic zeal, and Lee Wilkof, playing Samuel Byck, who wanted to assassinate Nixon by crashing a plane into the White House (he got as far as hijacking the plane), is briefly funny dictating messages to Leonard Bernstein. But nothing Zaks can do succeeds in offsetting the show's triviality or the sententiousness of its style.

—MIMI KRAMER

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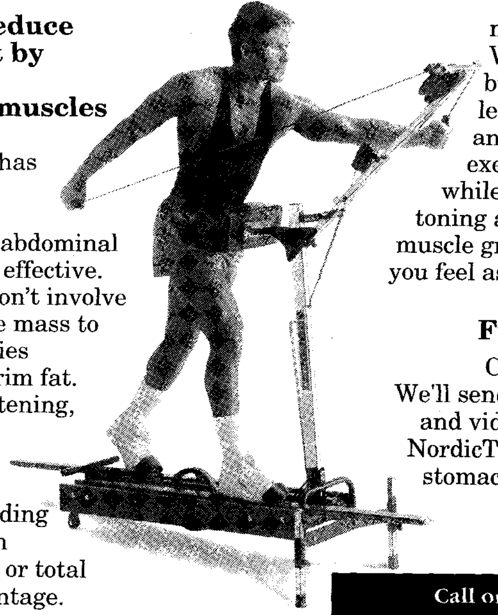


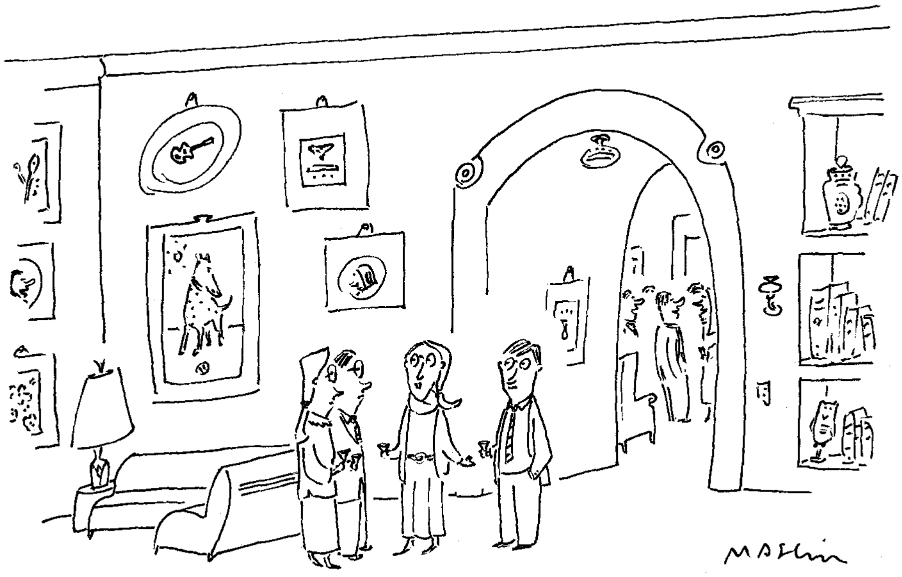
# THE CURRENT CINEMA

## *The Doctor and the Director*

THE neurologist Oliver Sacks is a supremely odd and complicated man. This bearded giant, a motorcyclist, a fern lover, and a weight lifter (who has been known to squat-press six hundred pounds), has a passionate curiosity about people. Born in London, in 1933, of physician parents who trained in neurology, and with two older brothers who became physicians, he grew up in a household where everybody swapped medical stories, and he has developed the clinical case study into an art form. Published as collections of essays, his narratives about his patients are speculative, exploratory, and maybe a little mad. He's drawn into his patients' aberrant states—he sees their abnormalities as brilliantly unique forms of consciousness to be charted—and, as he attempts to interpret them, he's drawn in further and further. He never closes off a subject; he goes on raising more possibilities, and his emotional essays sprout footnotes—excursions into ideas he's trying out. Reading him, you're absorbed in the play of his mind. (You may suspect that he is, too—that he's half bewildered by himself.) He probably makes more outré reaches of the imagination than any other essayist, and you might think you were reading freak-show detective stories if it weren't for the transforming power of his childlike sincerity and his tough-mindedness. Following him down a byway in a footnote, you think, This is loony, and then, as you read more of the tiny print, it doesn't seem so farfetched—it seems marvellously plausible. You entertain the idea, conscious that his interests are encyclopedic and he could go on footnoting forever.

A few months before the literary critic Anatole Broyard died last year, he wrote, "My ideal doctor . . . would resemble Oliver Sacks. . . . I can imagine Dr. Sacks *entering* my condition, looking around at it from the inside like a benevolent landlord with a tenant, trying to see how he could make the premises more livable for me. He would see the genius of my illness. He would mingle his daemon with mine; we would wrestle with my fate together."

Sacks is like a mythological physician: part philosopher, part medicine man—a specialist in illnesses so peculiar that they double as miracles. His 1983 essay "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" (it came out in book form in 1985) was turned into an opera, and the opera was turned into a movie. His 1973 book, "Awakenings," about administering a drug that woke up patients who had been frozen in apathy for decades, inspired poems and stories, and was the basis for a remarkable 1974 documentary by Yorkshire Television and for several radio and stage adaptations, including Harold Pinter's 1982 one-act play "A Kind of Alaska."



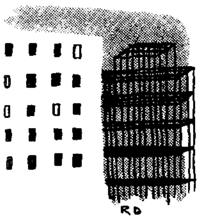
*"This is Floyd, the new wrinkle I'm ironing out."*

The new, Hollywood "Awakenings," directed by Penny Marshall, who made "Big," is far from a terrible movie. Marshall is talented and persuasive; she understands tone and pace. But her talent is to work the audience. There's an underlying conflict between Marshall, who comes from a show-business family, and Sacks, the fabulist of illness. She exalts the normal, and she keeps zapping us to feel the humanistic, the obvious. (Her forte is to make blandness ring true.) The producers sent her the script before she'd read the book, and the scriptwriter, Steven Zaillian, had prepared the way for her approach by turning Sacks' tragicomedy of brainsickness into a do-gooding synthesis of three Academy Award winners: "Charly," "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," and "Rain Man."

In the years between 1916 and 1927, during and after the flu epidemic that affected half the world's population, there was also an international epidemic of encephalitis lethargica—virus-borne sleeping sickness—which took or blighted the lives of about five million people. Some of the survivors recovered but later developed an advanced form of Parkinson's disease, with tremors and tics and twisted, bent-over bodies, and they relapsed into a vegetative state and remained nearly motionless and speechless for decades. In 1966, Oliver Sacks, who had trained in medicine at Oxford and in London, and had moved to this country in 1960, began working in a Bronx hospital for the chronically ill, where there were about eighty of these "living statues." In the spring and summer of 1969, he gave them L-dopa, which had previously been given only for ordinary, mild Parkinson's.

The book "Awakenings" is Sacks' account of how the individual patients—twenty in particular—responded. It's about their exuberance when they woke from their trances, and then their anguish when they recognized that they were in their fifties and sixties, and their lives had been used up, and it's about their confusion when each reacted to L-dopa differently and they ran into what Sacks calls "radical trouble." Some of them went quite mad, and in agitated ways. In an epilogue that appears in the expanded 1983 edition and in the further expanded 1990 edition, Sacks includes follow-up material on their subsequent ordeals. It's an unbelievably rich story. Sacks makes you feel how much is at stake for each one of them. You feel how trapped they are in their uncontrollable bodies.

In the movie, Sacks has turned into Dr. Sayer (Robin Williams)—kind but sweetly inept and distant from everyone. Sacks' eccentricities have been used as the homey, lovable foibles of a movie genius circa Paul Muni. (Dr. Sayer is always fumbling to make a note on his hand or his sleeve, because he doesn't remember to carry a pad of paper; he panics about where his glasses are when they're on his nose; his shirttails hang out; and so on.) You'd think you were going to get the story of a humble scientist who makes a great discovery; that's the model for much of the movie. Dr. Sayer's intuition tells him that the statues are "alive inside"—a possibility that other doctors reject—and he finds ways to prove it. When he sees a Ouija board at the hospital, he's struck by an idea: he gives one to a benumbed patient, Leonard (Robert De Niro), and Leonard taps out a reference to Rilke's lines about the caged panther.



The movie's Leonard is the test case—the first one to be given L-dopa. When he awakens, he seems to be a quiet, average sort of fellow—not the kind of man who'd quote Rilke, or anybody else. The poetic allusion is a tattered remnant from Sacks' case history, which tells us that though Leonard's post-encephalitic disease began when he was fifteen, he graduated from Harvard and was finishing his Ph.D. thesis when he became so incapacitated he couldn't go on. He was hospitalized in a nearly petrified state when he was thirty, but, with the help of his mother, he had gone on reading; he could make tiny voluntary movements with one hand, and he used an alphabet board to turn out book reviews for the hospital magazine. There was no mystery about whether he was "alive inside"—he'd been tapping out his side of literary conversations with Sacks for several years before he took L-dopa. (Sacks described Leonard's book reviews as showing "a vital, humorous, and at times Rabelaisian relish for the world.")

On being physically liberated, De Niro's Leonard doesn't exhibit the hyperbolic joy of Sacks' Leonard, who speaks in "a loud and clear voice" and is suddenly "drunk on reality." De Niro's Leonard has a genteel romance with Paula (Penelope Ann Miller), a lovely young woman who comes to the hospital to visit her paralyzed father; this courtly Leonard is nothing like Sacks' Leonard, who within a few weeks of awakening had formed an image of himself as "a Dionysiac god packed with virility and power" and had "started to masturbate—fiercely, freely and with little concealment—for hours each day." In the movie, after a frenzied paranoid phase and the return of his tremors and tics, Leonard feels himself reverting to helplessness, and, eager to help others, he calls to the doctor to photograph what's happening, and exhorts him, "Learn from me! Learn. . . ." This bears some relation to a passage in a fifty-thousand-word autobiography that Sacks' Leonard had typed out during a three-week high. He'd written, "I am a living candle. I am consumed that you may learn. New things will be seen in the light of my suffering." But that was euphoria. In the later editions of "Awakenings" Sacks documents Leonard's last days, when he was ill and emaciated and, after twelve years of experiments with L-dopa and other drugs that failed, he was once again given L-dopa. Sacks writes, "I was in the clinic when the ward phoned to say that Leonard had 'come to.' Astounded, and fearful, I rushed to his bed. He had an enormous voice now, and he yelled his soul out: 'Hell and damnation! Fucking DOPA, fucking miracle. Look at me now—I'm falling apart. I'm dying, almost dead, and *now* you resurrect me with L-DOPA! This is a *stinking* miracle—obscene—a lot worse than Lazarus. . . . For Christ's sake stop it, and let me die in peace.' I stopped it, of course, and let him be."

The movie douses everything fiery. Everything is shaped for you to root for the resurrections, and then nothing much happens. Even the flapper salaciousness that a little old woman in the book had preserved from the twenties is gone. The humanism is so pallid that the awakened patients don't seem very different from the way they were in their comatose states. Though the movie medium would make it possible for a series of awakenings over days and weeks to be edited together so that we could have a short spell alone with each of the film's roughly fifteen patients,

The small island of Dominica vs. "progress."

A person could embark, exactly like a wine connoisseur, upon a review of the "top notes" and the "finishes" of perfumes, after-shaves, colognes, skin bracers, arriving finally at the not uninteresting subject of pheromones, or human sexual attractants.

Relax. I do not intend to do so.

But I do think that men, for the next 75 years or so, will be less edgy in the presence of "Spice Islands After Shave" than "Calvin Klein's Obsession Perfume for Men."

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and a chance to respond to the rhythmic variations of how they come to speak and move, the moviemakers chose to falsify what happened and have the whole troupe awakening at the same time. They're a blur, with famous performers, such as Anne Meara and Judith Malina and Dexter Gordon, turning up like special guest sleepers.

After raising the false question "Are they alive inside?," the movie doesn't really answer it—doesn't make it clear if, when they were thought to be brain-dead, they actually knew what was going on around them and were cognizant of rough treatment or neglect. (When awakened, did they recognize the people who'd been caring for them?) Paula, the woman whom Leonard develops the crush on, says that she doesn't know if her father (who's had a stroke) is conscious of her visits; Leonard tells her, "He knows. Your father. He knows you visit him." But it seems as if Leonard is just reassuring her. (He's not an expert on strokes; we're being fobbed off.) In Sacks' account, the torpid patients are aware in dreamlike ways, and their symptoms reflect what's happening to them in the hospital. The movie is less interested in the interior life of the "frozen" patients than in setting up a symmetrical plot pattern: the awakened patients may regress to a stuporous despair, but Dr. Sayer awakens—i.e., he loses his fear of human contact. Could anyone think there was an equivalence here?

This is another of Robin Williams' benevolent-eunuch roles. He's the good man here, as he was in "Good Morning, Vietnam" and "Dead Poets Society," and he does a fine job of it: he shows the warmth and reticence and empathy that Dr. Sayer needs. Sayer needs something else, though, in order to be a real character: some ruthlessness, perhaps, or egotism—something to keep him from being a noble fud. And Williams shouldn't have to hold himself in like this. He'd better move on, before he turns into the movies' permanent winsome messiah. As the head nurse, who breaks through to Dr. Sayer, Julie Kavner has something of Peggy Ashcroft's transcendent plainness. She doesn't overdo her fluky inflections or her comedy timing; with almost no material, and with a role that's an embarrassment, she gives the best performance in the movie. Yet Penny Marshall can't help herself; she's a cajoler. Knowing that Kavner is the real thing, she still uses her to touch us and touch us and touch us.

As for De Niro—well, when you're playing a silent, somnolent person who wakes up and soon afterward erupts into madness, you certainly give the impression that you're acting. Twitching and shaking (impressively), De Niro is upping the ante on Dustin Hoffman's autistic savant in "Rain Man." This is not a field of acting that commands respect. In "My Left Foot," Daniel Day-Lewis plays the arrogant sensualist inside the deformed body; that's not the kind of thing De Niro is doing. He's giving you an actor's idea of a decent guy who'll be appealing to people. There's the smile of happy complicity between Dr. Sayer and the awakened Leonard. There's Leonard, on his feet, opening his arms to greet his mother. (You may never be able to scrape off Randy Newman's syrupy "awakening" music.) When Leonard is coming apart and says goodbye to Paula—to his dream of a normal life—she dances with him in the cafeteria, without music, and her nearness to him keeps him peaceful. The scene is performed with great tact; we're being pressured by that tact. And when Leonard, writhing with jerks and tics, goes back to the ward and, from behind the grate on the window, watches Paula go down the street, his symbolic imprisonment—once again the caged panther—is simply more than we need. Mostly, the too-muchness is Marshall's, but sometimes it's clearly De Niro's. When he holds out his arms to his mother, he knows he's a poster boy.

Of course, we're affected by people coming to active life after decades of stillness—how could we not be? But this forced banalizing of our emotions is show-business shtick. The patients don't exist except as fodder for pathos.

The movie is all about the doctor being a caring individual. Oliver Sacks, who's sensitized to prodigious kinds of experience, is turned into an absent-minded professor banging his head. The movie is at its most nakedly manipulative in another cafeteria scene where, just after Leonard has revived, Dr. Sayer pleads for the money to give L-dopa to the fifteen remaining post-encephalitic patients, and his supervisor (John Heard) says it would cost more than he's got. Overhearing this, the head nurse comes over to their table and hands the boss her personal check, and then the other nurses and the orderlies come over and hand him their personal checks. It's Dickensian, and Marshall, who values a warm huggy, pushes it further. The supervisor sets up a meeting with the hospital benefactors; they look at film of Leonard before and after, and when they (simultaneously) start writing checks Dr. Sayer's eyes fill. He's shilling for us to cry.

Sacks was technical adviser on the production, and in the latest edition of the book (it keeps growing, like a journal) he includes a description of the making of the movie. This piece of puffery mars the book, but it's invaluable as an example of the higher self-deception. Sacks wants to dissociate himself from the script's inventions without damning them. And so he writes, "There was a fine dramatic ending which moved me as I read it, even though, factually, it was completely untrue," and "While in some ways [the script] aimed at a very close reconstruction of how things had been, it also introduced a plot, several plots, which were entirely new. But I saw that this was necessary, and I liked many of the dramatic inventions (though I had reservations about the creation of a violent psychiatric ward . . . )." He writes about guiding the director and Robin Williams and De Niro to various hospitals where they could observe the patients and talk to them, and he expresses his awe of De Niro for mastering the symptoms of Parkinson's. And then he writes, of watching the mass awakening being shot, "What was overwhelming for me was the *truth* of this scene. Steve Zaillian had invented it, but he had invented it right." Philosopher, ideal doctor, sucker.

IN "Sleeping with the Enemy," Julia Roberts doesn't have the vivid big grin that gave last year's "Pretty Woman" its spark. She has been turned into a blank goddess; she's touching, at moments, yet the way the camera fawns on her she could be posing for stills. She plays a frightened young wife who fakes her death and changes her identity to escape her rich husband (Patrick Bergin), a psychopathic perfection-

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ist. Julia Roberts is an incredible object—you can at least see why a perfectionist would want to hang on to her. But, watching her as she innocently digs clams on Cape Cod, you may have premonitions of dullness. And when she escapes her posh, sterile beach house and takes on her new identity in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the wholesome town where she feels at home, she's happily caught up in a Fourth of July celebration, and then—our cup runneth over—she gets to go to a carnival. When she agrees to have dinner with a sincere young man (Kevin Anderson) who teaches drama at a local college, she arrives to find he's burned the roast. Do men in the movies always have to burn the dinner so we'll know they're straight?

You might expect the plot to have a few surprise twists, but the script, by Ronald Bass, out of a novel by Nancy Price, is one letdown after another. Joseph Ruben, who directed, has proved himself a smart tease and trickster; he's brought off three thrillers in a row—"Dreamscape" (1984), "The Stepfather" (1987), and "True Believer" (1989). And he does a smooth job here, with snappy editing every time there's a cut to the enraged husband on the wife's trail. But a lousy piece of music well conducted doesn't get you very far.

The whole movie is spent waiting for the husband to arrive. Meanwhile, we look at Julia trying on outfits in the college theatre's costume room. "Sleeping with the Enemy" is a glossy combination of secondhand showing-off-Julia scenes from "Pretty Woman" and secondhand scares from "The Stepfather." A little tawdriness would have helped. I was reminded of Roy Blount's

> Blondes who don't go far enough,
> *Film* that isn't *noir* enough.

THE jokes in "L.A. Story" spin by as if choreographed by summer breezes. Carl Reiner has been heard to say of Steve Martin, "There's a mysterious man in there who comes out when he writes his own scripts." On the evidence of "L.A. Story," which Martin wrote and stars in, it's a mysteriously happy man. Maybe Martin couldn't have written this autobiographical fantasy if Woody Allen hadn't made "Annie Hall" and "Manhattan," but what he loves about L.A. is what Allen rejected it for: its pleasure-loving, materialistic irresponsibleness. Allen sees moral lightness as immorality, as evil; he didn't ever seem to get the humor of L.A.

Martin's movie is a take on "Annie Hall" that turns it inside out. His attitudes are close to the ones that Paul Mazursky developed, starting with the script of "I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!" and running through his whole series of L.A. movies: "Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice," "Alex in Wonderland," "Blume in Love," and "Down and Out in Beverly Hills." Mazursky was a New Yorker, but he fell in love with the loop-the-loopiness of L.A.—he didn't fight the pleasure or crab at it. For Martin, who grew up in Southern California, superficiality is the norm. "L.A. Story" is totally inconsequential, and he accepts that—it doesn't bother him. He isn't afraid of silliness. And that's what makes the movie such a light-headed joyride for an audience.

As Harris K. Telemacher, a clowning TV weatherman, Martin is split between his wonder-struck obsession with a British journalist, played by Victoria Tennant (in an Annie Hall hat), and the carefree high of sex without love, represented by a bouncy nymph played by Sarah Jessica Parker. That's all there is, really—that and the jokes and the atmosphere and a batch of sharp performers (Rick Moranis uncredited, Marilu Henner as a tough dame with a cold stare, Susan Forristal as Martin's pal, M. C. Shan as a waiter-rapper, and Richard E. Grant, Kevin Pollak, and Patrick Stewart, among others). What keeps most of it airy and tingling is the artfulness of the director, the English TV ace Mick Jackson (who's best known here for his mini-series "A Very British Coup," starring Ray McAnally), and the talents of the cinematographer, Andrew Dunn; the editor, Richard A. Harris; and Peter Melnick, who provided a funny, lilting score.

Sometimes the jokes aren't fresh: there's a particularly long, dull one about a painting. And things don't move fast enough toward the end. I think that's because Martin, an old-fashioned romantic at heart, doesn't see that Sarah Jessica Parker, twirling around him, her long, curly hair like eiderdown, is the natural heroine of an L.A. movie. She's the spirit of L.A.: she keeps saying yes.

—PAULINE KAEL

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## EARTHQUAKE FEVER

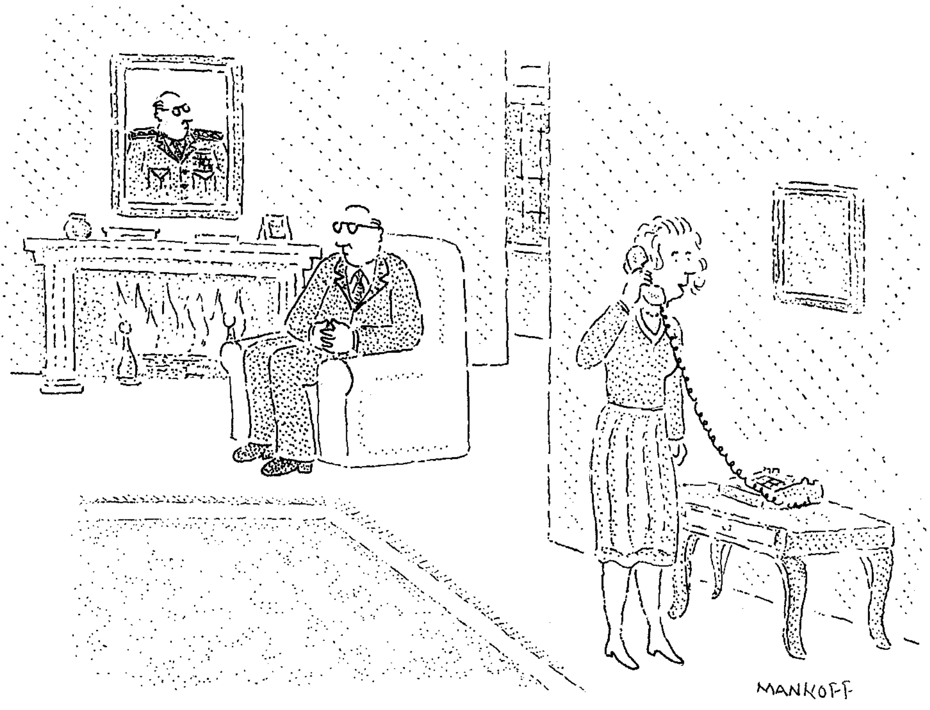
ON Monday, December 3, 1990, there was no earthquake along the New Madrid Seismic Zone, an ancient weakness in the earth's crust which runs crookedly for a hundred and twenty-five miles from northern Arkansas to southern Illinois, alongside the Mississippi River. Iben Browning, an inventor, business consultant, and self-taught climatologist, had said there was a one-in-two chance that on or about that date a major earthquake would occur in the area. No, said government and academic earthquake specialists: the chance was more like one in sixty thousand.

It was a non-earthquake about which no one was wrong. Browning could take comfort in the *other* one out of two, and the academics and government people could take pride in their fifty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine. Of course, it's not quite true that no one was wrong. The St. Louis psychic who said that the earthquake would happen at the end of November, perhaps on Thanksgiving weekend, was wrong. A man named Jacques called in to a Rolla, Missouri, radio show and said that the earthquake would take place on Tuesday, December 4th, because earthquakes were triggered by underground nuclear explosions, and his research showed that those explosions always happened on Tuesdays. He was wrong. So was Larry Evans, who wrote a letter to the editor of the New Madrid *Weekly Record* in which he said that while praying he had received the information that the earthquake would be at ten in the morning on December 2nd. And so were the coffee drinkers in cafés who scribbled with ballpoint pen "1234567890" on paper napkins, circling the first two numerals for December, the next for the day. Four-fifty-six was the time of the magnitude 7.8 earthquake. And then they would proudly circle the last digits, the nine and the zero, for the year.

I have a farm about a hundred miles from New Madrid, Missouri, which is in the middle of the New Madrid Seismic Zone. The zone is a seismically active area, and geologists expect that it will someday produce an earthquake of the dimensions of a series of earthquakes that took place there in the winter of 1811-12, which were among the most severe to have occurred on the North American continent in historical times and also among the most severe ever to have taken place on the planet. The zone continually acts up. There are several hundred earthquakes along it every year, most of them too small to be felt. But one afternoon some years ago I was standing in my living room and felt the floor jiggle beneath my feet. It made me distinctly queasy to have my most basic assumptions about the solidity and rightness of the world denied by the earth's turning to Jell-O. I learned later from the radio news that the earthquake was in the New Madrid Seismic Zone.

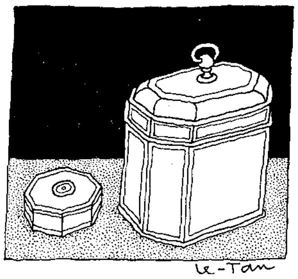
I first heard of Browning's prediction early in December of 1989. Browning had spoken at the Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture, held at Osage Beach from the tenth to the twelfth of December. News reports identified Browning as a climatologist from Albuquerque who claimed to have predicted the destructive San Francisco Bay area earthquake of the previous October. His new prediction was unsettling. I hadn't known that it was possible to predict earthquakes. I wondered if he could really do it. And, if so, how?

I telephoned Browning in early March of last year. He sounded wary and defensive, and made it clear that he didn't like to talk to journalists, but he did explain to me that his "projection" (he bristled at the word "prediction") was based on tidal forces. On December 3, 1990, he told me, the sun and the moon would be in line with the earth, creating high tidal forces. "And high tidal forces trigger the eruption of volcanoes—I'm a vulcanologist, really; this earthquake business is just a sideline—and earthquakes," he said. I told him I found that interesting and would like to see some documentation of the projection of the San Francisco earthquake before it happened. "If you want to know what the scientific community thinks of my work, you can ask David Stewart, the director of the Center for Earthquake Studies, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri," he responded, sidestepping my request. "He'll tell you how much my work is worth. And those other details . . . Well, I'm retired now, and my daughter, Evelyn, is editing my newsletter. You can talk to



*"Oh, he's pretty depressed—he's the only retired general the networks haven't called."*

her." He handed the telephone over to Evelyn Browning Garriss. I needed some proof of her father's "projections," I told her. "Oh, you want something on his methods?" she asked. Well, yes, that, too. But it would be really important to show that he had mentioned the earthquakes *before* they happened, I explained. She took down my name and address and promised to send me a packet of information. It never came.



Soon a tape of Browning's speech which I had requested from the Missouri Agriculture Department arrived, and I was able to hear him say, "December 3, 1990, at thirty degrees north latitude, there will be the highest tidal force in twenty-seven years. . . . We are back in the same triggering-force configuration as of December 3rd next year as we were when the great New Madrid earthquake went off. Will it go off? . . . If you pull a trigger on a gun it goes off only if it is loaded. . . . Certainly the opportunity exists for it to be loaded, because a hundred thousand cubic miles of dirt or so has washed off of this part of the world down to and is now constituting the Mississippi River delta. So there has been an enormous load taken off this part of the plate." He also entertained the audience with jokes about journalists and Communism. And he spoke about the theory of the greenhouse effect: "Fundamentally, it's garbage." Browning believed instead that the planet is cooling. "By 2010 . . . the Mississippi will normally freeze over down to about Natchez." He tied historic cold periods to political unrest and predicted that the near future would be a time of famine, revolution, and war.

In May, I drove over to New Madrid to look around. New Madrid was laid out in 1789 by George Morgan, a Revolutionary War patriot who had grown disillusioned about the new republic's chances of survival. Working with Spanish settlers in New Orleans, Morgan drew up plans for a large city, a strategic metropolis, on the Mississippi River, which would be controlled by the King of Spain. The spot he chose was L'Anse à la Graisse (Cove of Grease, so called because of the fat bear and buffalo that could be hunted nearby), and, hoping to ingratiate himself with the King, he named the town New Madrid. There were difficulties. Morgan lost interest and returned to the East. The town survived, but not on the scale that Morgan had dreamed of. The Spanish built a fort, levied duties on river traffic, and by century's end the sandy bluffs along the river were home to six hundred people inured to fighting ague and floods.

That original New Madrid crumbled into the river during the 1811-12 earthquakes. The New Madrid of today is slightly to the north of the original site, in the part of Missouri called the bootheel, hunkered down behind the earthen levee that protects it from the Mississippi. Yellow flowers—hop clover, cinquefoil, and dandelions—were blooming on the levee the day I was there. They looked cheerful, but the river—muddy, powerful, turbulent, ominous—did not. Next to the levee is a historical museum, housed in a nineteenth-century brick building that was originally the First and Last Chance Saloon, a stopping point for thirsty riverboat men. In it are displays relating to Indians, to New Madrid's role in the Civil War, and to the great earthquakes. The museum does a brisk business in earthquake T-shirts ("It's Our Fault" and "Visit Historic New Madrid While It's Still There"). A docent told me that she was aware of Browning's prediction but didn't credit it. "We're used to earthquakes," she said. "We have five a week. Had one yesterday. I've lived here all my life, and I never even heard about those big ones until I was all the way grown up." The center of town looks rundown and shabby, and many of the stores along Main Street are empty. But beyond them are the well-tended houses of the town's thirty-three hundred residents, many of whom work for the Noranda Aluminum smelting plant or for Associated Electric Cooperative, a power-generating station, or for the A. C. Riley Cotton Company. This is primarily an agricultural town. Soybeans, corn, and cotton grow in the flat, alluvial bottomland that surrounds it.

That day, high winds blowing over the plowed fields turned the air yellow with dust. I drove on down to the Mississippi River crossing—past Portageville, which was originally Shin Bone and is now the home of the annual National Soybean Festival. I wanted to see Reelfoot, the lake created by the earthquake, on the Tennessee side of the river, catty-corner from New Madrid. Part of Reelfoot is now a Federal Wildlife Refuge, and the day I was there it was specializing in great blue herons. The lake is fourteen miles long, five miles wide, and eighteen feet deep, with something about it that reminded me of an Army Corps of Engineers project. I had read an account of a hunter and trapper who was present at the time of the earthquake. He told of great fissures appearing and the ground sinking. I tried to imagine the sound and shudder made by the land as it gave way.

One Indian legend has it that Kalopin, or Reelfoot, was a Chickasaw chief with a clubfoot, who fell in love with a Choctaw princess named Laughing Eyes. Her father refused to let him have her, so he abducted her, despite a dream he'd had in which he was warned that the earth would rock in anger and the waters would swallow his village. During the marriage ceremony, the earth began to roll in rhythm with the tomtoms, and the Father of Waters roared over the village. Under Reelfoot Lake, the legend says, lie the bodies of Reelfoot, his people, and Laughing Eyes.

But the Creek said otherwise. They said that when Tecumseh, the great Shawnee chief, was trying to form a federation of tribes to stop the white men from taking their lands he grew weary of their indecision and warned, in the autumn of 1811, that he would leave them and in thirty days' time would stamp his foot. He did so, and the earth rumbled and split, and then they knew that the Great Spirit had sent him.

THE logarithmic Richter scale for measuring the magnitude of earthquakes was not developed until 1935, and so could not be used to measure the 1811-12 earthquakes. But the modified Mercalli scale, which measures the severity of an earthquake in a particular area—how many houses were destroyed, how much sand and mud were ejected from the earth—can be applied, using contemporary descriptions. It is expressed in Roman numerals, I through XII. The XII stands for total destruction and corresponds roughly to the high eights on the Richter scale. The great 1906 San Francisco earthquake, for example, was a VII. Starting on December 16, 1811, and extending through the following February, the New Madrid Seismic Zone experienced at least three earthquakes that are rated XI and one that is rated XII. In between, and for months afterward, there were almost constant smaller shocks. Samuel Mitchill, who was a professor of natural history and a senator from New York, collected eyewitness reports of the earthquakes, and told of a Dr. Robertson, living in nearby St. Genevieve, who recorded more than five hundred tremors and "then ceased to note them any more, because he became weary of the task."

In the western third of North America, the convoluted folds of the earth's surface and its fractured geologic structure tend to absorb the seismic energy of an earthquake. Even an 8.5 earthquake in Los Angeles, say, would fade by the time it reached San Francisco, some four hundred miles away. But in the eastern two-thirds of the continent the same energy travels more easily. Below the New Madrid Seismic Zone lies a deeply buried rift in the continental plate, a weakened spot where the earth's crust once started to pull apart. The rift is under stress from tectonic forces. A trough above the rift has, over millions of years, filled with gravel and sand. During those 1811-12 earthquakes, water mingled with the soft substrate and turned it into something resembling quicksand—a process called liquefaction. Seismic waves moved up through the mixture and through the solid slab that is the surface of the eastern two-thirds of the continent. The earthquake, first felt in New Madrid on December 16th, disturbed Washington, D.C., more than eight hundred miles away. According to Mitchill, "a gentleman standing in his chamber at his desk and writing, in the third story of a brick house, upon the Capitol Hill, suddenly perceived his body to be in motion, vibrating backward and forward, and producing dizziness." Tremors were also reported as far away as Boston and northern Canada. Judge James Witherell, of Michigan, told Mitchill that Indians living on an island in a lake outside Detroit saw the waters of the lake appear to "tremble and boil like a great pot over a hot fire; and immediately a vast number of large tortoises rose to the surface, and swam rapidly to the shore, where they were taken for food." All told, tremors were felt over an area of a million square miles—half of the United States.

There is no lack of firsthand reports from New Madrid itself, for nearly everyone there survived. Understandably, the accounts vary according to the place where the witness was shortly after 2 A.M. on December 16th, when the first shock hit, but all the witnesses speak of feeling terror and nausea as the earth heaved, and describe the earth being torn apart, the elements mingling in a frightening way, and hearing sharp noises and rumbling ones as the earth spewed sulfurous gases, sand, and coal. The air, thick and malodorous, was colored by flames from small cabins collapsing into hearth fires. The Mississippi River roiled and roared, swallowing the sandy bluffs as they fell into it, running against the normal current as it rushed to spread back into new holes and crevices, creating waterfalls where they had never been. A comprehensive summary of eyewitness accounts, collected by Timothy Flint, was published in Boston in 1826. Flint wrote:

> The shock of these earthquakes . . . must have equalled in their terrible heavings of the earth, any thing of the kind that has been recorded. . . . Whole tracts were plunged into the bed of the river. The grave-yard at New Madrid, with all its sleeping tenants, was precipitated into the bend of the stream. Most of the houses were thrown down. Large lakes . . . were made in an hour. Other lakes were drained . . . and when the water disappeared a stratus of sand . . . was left in its place. The trees split in the midst, lashed one with another, and are still visible over great tracts of country, inclining in every direction and in every angle to the earth and the horizon. They described the undulation of the earth as resembling waves, increasing in elevation as they advanced, and when they had attained a certain fearful height, the earth would burst, and vast volumes of water, and sand, and pit-coal were discharged, as high as the tops of the trees. I have seen a hundred of these chasms, which remained fearfully deep, although in a very tender alluvial soil, and after a lapse of seven years. Whole districts were covered with white sand, so as to become uninhabitable. The water at first covered the whole country. . . . The birds themselves lost all power and disposition to fly, and retreated to the bosoms of men. . . . A few persons sunk in . . . chasms, and were providentially extricated. One person died of affright. . . . A bursting of the earth just below the village of New Madrid arrested this mighty stream in its course, and caused a reflux of its waves, by which in a little time a great number of boats were swept

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> by the ascending current . . . and left upon the dry earth. . . . They remark that the shocks were clearly distinguishable into two classes; those in which the motion was horizontal, and those in which it was perpendicular. The latter were attended with explosions, and the terrible mixture of noises, that preceded and accompanied the earthquakes, in a louder degree, but were by no means so desolating and destructive as the other.

Modern earthquake deaths and injuries are caused by the collapse of modern structures. The chimneys of the hundred or so low cabins in New Madrid collapsed as they, and the church and schoolhouse, crumbled, but few people died, even in the boats on the river. Including the person who died of "affright," fewer than a dozen deaths were reported in all accounts.

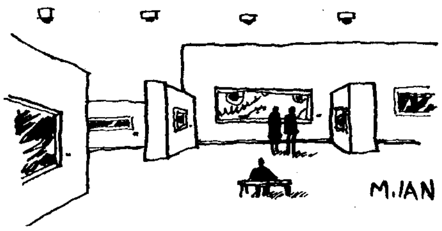
IN the summer, I went to Washington, D.C., and, using the research facilities at the Library of Congress, read through the geological literature on the New Madrid Seismic Zone and tidal-force theory. By also reading the New Madrid *Weekly Record*, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, and my own Ozark home-town newspaper, I was able to follow, with increasing amazement, the growth of earthquake fever.

Every day, the moon exerts a steady, smooth gravitational pull on the earth as it moves in its orbit. On the oceans, where there is no obstruction, it tugs the waters and causes tides. On land, the response is not so dramatic, but there is still a small, measurable bulge, nowhere more than one foot high, pulled along by the moon. When the sun is aligned with the moon, which on December 3, 1990, was at its nearest approach to the earth since 1912, the total gravitational force is only a little stronger than it is the rest of the time. The strain that was put on the New Madrid Seismic Zone on December 3rd can be measured and is represented by the number $1.186 \times 10^{-8}$. That number is interesting only when it is compared with the strain peak on the New Madrid Seismic Zone on January 17, 1988, another date of high tidal force: the figure then was $1.177 \times 10^{-8}$, only slightly smaller. There was no big earthquake on January 17, 1988, either. To put it another way, the strain over and above that during a normal high tide is analogous to the change in air pressure you would feel during a slow ride down in an elevator from the top floor of a ten-story building.

Nevertheless, we have all sat on beaches contemplating the tides, and it seems intuitively obvious that a force that can shift that much water *should* be able to release the chthonic power of an earthquake. Browning's theory of tidal-force triggers is not new. My 1890 Encyclopaedia Britannica discusses it, and assigns its "recent" formulation to Alexis Perrey, of Dijon. It is not rare, either: the *Old Farmer's Almanac* states flatly that the five days around high tides are the most likely ones for earthquakes in the Northern Hemisphere. The theory has occurred to scientists, too, and they have studied the correlation of tidal maxima with earthquakes. I called an old friend who is a geologist—Tom Simkin, a volcano expert at the Smithsonian Institution—after I discovered that he had contributed material to an ad-hoc group of eleven geologists who reviewed Browning's "projection" for the National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council, an advisory committee to the United States Geological Survey. He sent me a 1973 paper he had co-written pointing up a startling correlation between tidal peaks and earthquakes coming after the collapse of a volcanic caldera in the Galápagos Islands. I began to accumulate other papers that showed positive correlations.

I phoned Brian Mitchell, the chairman of the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at St. Louis University—also a member of the ad-hoc group—whose specialty is the New Madrid Seismic Zone. I asked him about the studies. "The trouble is that they show a variety of correlations," he said. "Some are with tidal maxima, and some with times in between. A number of them are based on erroneous data or contain mistakes in the calculation of data." He recommended that I talk to Thomas Heaton, still another member of the ad-hoc group, who is the seismologist in charge of the U.S.G.S. office in Pasadena and is a specialist in tidal theory.

"Well, it's hard," Heaton told me when I asked him about the correlations. "There are some late papers that show a correlation with earthquakes and tidal forces and some late papers that don't show a correlation. For instance, in 1975 I wrote a paper that showed that, while for earthquakes worldwide there was no correlation, for shallow earthquakes with a vertical component there was a slight correlation. But then I redid the data and found that under stricter statistical conditions there wasn't *any* correlation. So in 1982 I published another paper, saying, in effect, 'Never mind.' Browning cites my first paper in support of his theory but never mentions my second."



The ad-hoc evaluators had asked Browning about the omission. One of them, Ira Satterfield, from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, in Rolla, talked about it on the local public-radio station on November 30th. He said, "We asked Browning in our telephone conversations, 'Why don't you refer to Dr. Thomas Heaton's latest publication on this instead of his earliest one?' His reply was, 'It doesn't fit my situation.' "

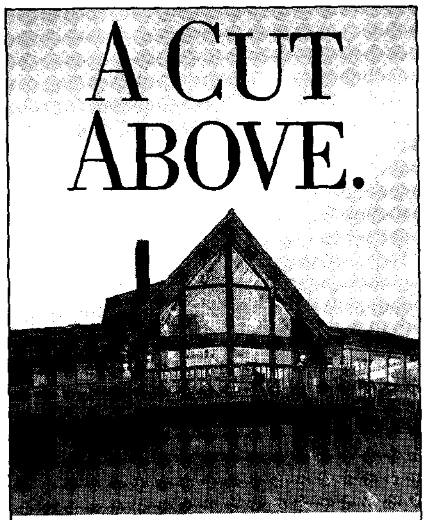
During my talk with Heaton, I asked him if the 1811-12 earthquakes at New Madrid had happened at a time of high tidal forces. He rummaged through some papers, and said, "On December 16, 1811, there was a peak tidal force, but not as high as one in 1809. There was an even higher one in December, 1813. January 23 and February 7, 1812, the dates of the big subsequent earthquakes, were not on tidal peaks at all." About all that can be said is that some earthquakes happen on tidal peaks. But tidal peaks happen without earthquakes. They can't be used as predictors.

BY autumn, Iben Browning was refusing all requests for interviews, and the man he had referred me to, David Stewart, proved nearly as elusive. "Out" or "Busy" was the answer I got when I telephoned his office, and he did not return my calls. Stewart *was* busy. He was the source that journalists from all over the country and from some other countries as well were going to when, in that newspaperly tradition of evenhandedness, they wanted a quote to counter the uniformly negative comments they were receiving from other geologists on the Browning prediction. In addition to giving quotes to the *Times*, the Chicago *Tribune*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the Manchester *Guardian*, Stewart was putting out news releases of his own about earthquake preparedness, talking to groups, and training others to talk to groups. I saw a picture of him in the New Madrid *Weekly Record* briefing Marilyn Quayle, the wife of the Vice-President, on the New Madrid Seismic Zone. But in early October his associate director, Michael Coe, who was formerly the head of the earthquake program at the Missouri Emergency Management Agency and had been reassigned to Stewart's office to help with the press of business, did phone me. He was able to answer a few questions, but referred me to Stewart for most of them. Stewart, however, was out of the office; he was visiting Browning. Browning himself had apparently had his fill of interviews; a British production company called TANSTAAFL (There Ain't No Such Thing as a Free Lunch) put out a hundred-minute video that was billed as his final and farewell interview. It had been advertised for ninety-nine dollars in several Midwestern newspapers under the words "A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE HAS BEEN PROJECTED BY DR. IBEN BROWNING TO STRIKE THIS AREA DECEMBER 3, 1990," and the ad featured an endorsement by Stewart: "He is, perhaps, the most intelligent man I've ever met."

In the TANSTAAFL videotape I was able to see that Browning is a corpulent man with glasses, a pale complexion, and short-cropped hair who speaks with assurance as he hands out snippets of highly complex information from such an array of fields that it is difficult for a viewer to evaluate his conclusions. Browning was born in Texas in 1918 and was a precocious child. He graduated from Southwest Texas State Teachers College at nineteen with a degree in mathematics. He was a test pilot during the Second World War and spent his off hours reading the Encyclopaedia Britannica. "I read articles at random, integrating them into what I already knew," he told an interviewer. After the war, he accumulated graduate degrees in the biological sciences from the University of Texas, worked as a researcher in a variety of defense-contract companies, and became an inventor, an author, and a business consultant. He is married. His daughter, Evelyn Garriss, who assists him, has an academic background in history. Now, at seventy-three, he suffers from complications of diabetes. He told one interviewer that he would be surprised to still be alive on December 3rd. (He was.) He received countrywide fame as a speaker at Blanchard's New Orleans Investment Conferences, beginning in 1985. These are annual conferences, organized by James Blanchard, the founder of the National Committee to Legalize Gold, and a conservative who would like to see the United States return to the gold standard. His self-confessed heroes are Ayn Rand and Barry Goldwater, both of whom have spoken at the conferences. Other speakers have been Milton Friedman and, this past year, along with Garriss, Arnaud de Borchgrave, the editor of the conservative Washington *Times*. The conferences are attended by private investors who don't like to put their money into the hands of brokers. Much of the TANSTAAFL video is taken up with advice from Browning and his daughter about investments in agriculture futures and the like, which are supposed to be made attractive by Browning's insistence that the earth is entering a period of colder weather. The press has routinely reported that Browning is a consultant to PaineWebber, but he has not been one for the past two years. He was one of "fifteen or so" consultants, and the only climatologist, who were used by PaineWebber for about ten years, according to Judith Seime, a research assistant at PaineWebber's Chicago office. She would not venture an estimate of the accuracy of his predictions.

Browning predicts lots of things. In the TANSTAAFL video he says that by 2050 half the world's population will have died from AIDS, and that in a thousand years it will have become an unimportant disease, like measles. In a book published in 1981, "Past and Future History," Browning has a nine-page list of "inferred" events that will take place between 1980 and 2010. Among them are the following:

> Canada will cease to export grain because the climate will get too cold.
>
> Egypt has a 50% chance of having its Aswan High Dam removed by . . . atomic bombs.
>
> Arizona will be wetter than in the last 1000 years. [Right so far.]
>
> Feudalism will sweep the earth.
>
> Eastern Europe will break out of Russian control.
>
> France will be deeply involved in retaking an Empire.
>
> Nineteen eighty-six at 30 degrees south latitude and 1990 at 30 degrees north latitude will be exceptional years for



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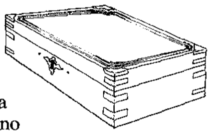

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> earthquakes and volcanoes. [Wrong.]
> Quantitative people will have high enough skills to go to robotic slaves but the humanistic people will turn to human slaves.

The TANSTAAFL video includes an intercut earlier interview purporting to show that Browning did indeed predict the San Francisco earthquake. That tape, according to the interviewer, was made in Albuquerque on September 16, 1989, one month and one day before the earthquake. During that portion of the video, a message in block letters fills the screen: "Dr. Browning warns of earthquake activity on or about 16 October, 1989. San Francisco earthquake occurred 17 October, 1989." But what Browning is actually saying behind those suggestive words is the following: "As of October 16, 1989, there will be a full moon. It's a four-hundred-and-thirteen-day precursor high tidal force of the high tide of December 3, 1990. And there'll be earthquakes go off and perhaps a volcano or two. . . ." There are earthquakes someplace in the world nearly every day. Browning's prediction, which left size and location unspecified, would have seemed impressive only to someone who didn't know of their frequency. Most news reports said that Browning "claimed" to have predicted the San Francisco earthquake, but the word "claim," like the journalistic "alleged," is passed over by many readers. One reporter, William Robbins, of the *Times*, tried to substantiate the claim. He called a man who said he had heard Browning in a speech forecast the San Francisco earthquake, but the devastating magnitude 7.1 earthquake and the grim TV pictures that followed may have given Browning's words more specificity in the man's memory than they actually had. The ad-hoc group obtained a transcript of the speech and found that he had said only that there would probably be "several earthquakes around the world, Richter 6 plus, and there may be a volcano or two"—little more than he said in the taped interview on the video. Over the past ten years, there has been an annual average of a hundred and ten earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater, working out to about one in any given three-day period. Browning's was a safe forecast, worldwide.

Who, I wondered, had given Browning his pulpit at the Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture, where all this started? That person, I found out, was Tom Hopkins, an employee of the Missouri Department of Agriculture and the coördinator of the conference. I talked to him in late October. "Well, this is the way it worked," he told me. "Before I get programs ready for these conferences, I ask around. Bill Galbraith—he's with the North American Equipment Dealers Association—he told me about this guy Browning. He said he'd spoken at one of their meetings about ten years ago and had made a bunch of predictions. Some of the guys kept track and a lot of them came true. Some say he's a quack, though. So I went to my boss, Charlie Kruse"—Missouri's Director of Agriculture—"and his reaction was 'You got to be kidding. We're not going to have some climatologist witch doctor at the conference.' But I convinced him. I said 'Trust me, Charlie.' I was talking to Dr. Browning just last Friday. I called him to see if we could schedule his daughter to come to speak at this year's conference, on December 9th to the 11th. He said, 'Well, if what I think is going to happen does happen, you aren't going to have a conference, but we'll book her.' And I said to him, 'There better be an earthquake on December 3rd or when she comes in the room everyone is going to say "Quack, quack." ' And he said, 'Tom, what we're saying is going to happen will happen, maybe on December 3rd, maybe January 1st, but it's going to happen.' "

SHORT STORY

*"Once upon a time, they lived happily ever after."*

ACADEMIC and government geologists and geophysicists were put in a difficult position by the Browning prediction. They knew that the New Madrid Seismic Zone was active and potentially dangerous; they had been trying for years to alert the public and improve building standards. But they didn't believe that anyone could forecast the day of an earthquake. On the other hand, they couldn't guarantee that there *wouldn't* be an earthquake on December 3rd. Geology is not a laboratory science; events cannot be repeated, or conditions altered. Geology's time span allows for no such neat experiments. Geologists speak of probabilities for earthquakes over large periods of time. Arch Johnston, the director of the Center for Earthquake Research and Information at Memphis State University, is a New Madrid Seismic Zone specialist and was also a member of the ad-hoc group. He has spent as much time as anyone has thinking about the potential for another devastating New Madrid earthquake, and has worked out the probabilities, on the basis of seismic data and the slim geohistorical record. The geologic evidence shows that there have been some very large earthquakes in the New Madrid Seismic Zone in times past. But, although there are hundreds of small earthquakes there every year, since the series of earthquakes during the winter of 1811-12 there has been only one large one—a IX, in 1895. In working out the probability of the occurrence of such an earthquake, Johnston and his colleague Susan Nava, in a 1985 paper, remind the reader, "The probability estimates . . . rely on the assumption that the New Madrid Seismic Zone generates major earthquakes in a repeated fashion."

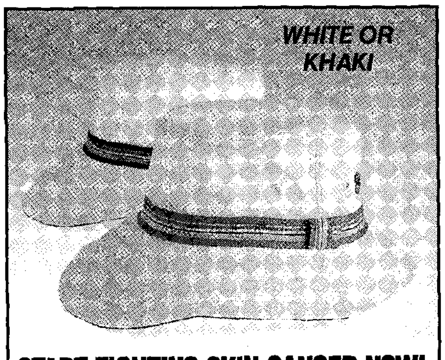
I asked Brian Mitchell, at St. Louis University, about this assumption. "It is basic to the analysis of earthquakes," he said. "It is as good an assumption as can be made. Geologic evidence from trenching through a part of the fault shows earthquakes that have caused liquefaction in the substrate, which indicates that there have been at least two previous severe earthquakes. These cannot be precisely dated but one may have occurred from six hundred to one thousand years ago and the other from six hundred to a thousand years before that." In the spring of 1990, in plenty of time for anyone who wanted a comparison with the Browning prediction, the U.S.G.S. published a circular, "Tecumseh's Prophecy: Preparing for the Next New Madrid Earthquake," which, using Johnston's work and that of others, estimated with appropriate scholarly caution that the probability that an earthquake of magnitude 6 to 6.5 would occur in the New Madrid Seismic Zone in the next fifteen years was somewhere between sixteen and sixty-three per cent.

This isn't fun. This doesn't send a little thrill of fear down the spine. This doesn't get people excited over earthquake preparedness. This doesn't get you on the evening news. What does do those things is the firmed-up Browning prediction that came out of a memo written by David Stewart last summer after an earlier visit to Browning. The memo was addressed to a number of geologists, but it circulated widely in Missouri state offices and in the press. In it Stewart accepts Browning's successful prediction record and praises Browning's abilities. It is here that Stewart makes the comment about Browning's intelligence which was used in the advertisement for the TANSTAAFL video. Stewart admits that he does not understand how Browning picks the particular spot where an earthquake will occur on a day of high tidal force. (According to Satterfield, that turned out to be simple. When asked about it by the ad-hoc group, Browning replied, "Well, like you-all, I read the paper," and went on to explain that he watched to see where geologists were spending money doing research.) In the memo Stewart gave the prediction greater specificity. He said that Browning was concerned about earthquakes on December 3, 1990, plus or minus two days, on the Hayward Fault (in California), in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, and in Tokyo. The memo went on to say, "He would assign a 50% chance to each of these, independent of the other, and in the aggregate an 87% probability that at least one of these three will go December 3. He is virtually 100% certain that some major quake will occur in that band of latitudes on or about that date." Those percentages, unlike the less exciting ones from the U.S.G.S., turned up frequently in news reports thereafter.

Mark Twain never wrote about the New Madrid earthquake, but he did write about the Mississippi River and the kinds of conclusions that the study of it can lead to. In "Life on the Mississippi" Twain described how the river, in its convoluted, curling path, sometimes cut a new channel through an oxbow. Such a cutoff was important to river pilots, for it could save them miles. He documents several cutoffs that he knew of from his own piloting days and a number that had been recorded over the years. And then he writes:

> In the space of one hundred and seventy-six years the Lower Mississippi has shortened itself two hundred and forty-two miles. That is an average of a trifle over one mile and a third per year. Therefore, any calm person, who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Oölitic Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, the Lower Mississippi River was upward of one million three hundred thousand miles long, and stuck out over the Gulf of Mexico like a fishing-rod. And by the same token any person can see that seven hundred and forty-two years from now the Lower Mississippi will be only a mile and three-quarters long, and Cairo and New Orleans will have joined their streets together, and be plodding comfortably along under a single mayor and a mutual board of aldermen. There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesome returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact.

My copy of the Stewart memo is from a state office, and someone has underlined a section of it that mentions bridges collapsing on the Mississippi and the military coming in with pontoon bridges. Someone has scrawled "Very interesting" across the top of the memo. Bureaucracies, public and private, fired up their Wats lines and Xerox machines and began holding meetings, conducting earthquake-



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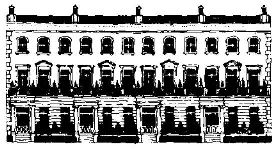

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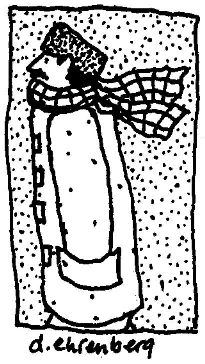
preparedness seminars and drills, and issuing information to help the public prepare quickly for a destructive earthquake. Schools announced plans to close on December 3rd. In the autumn, minor tremors along the seismic zone, the sort that would not have rated even a mention in years past, provided the news pegs to hang stories on in newspapers and news magazines across the country. The New Madrid Seismic Zone made *Time*, *Newsweek*, and national television. The United States Figure Skating Association, which was scheduled to begin its regional competition on December 3rd in St. Louis, postponed the meet. My home-town newspaper reported that a pair of state troopers, authoritative, shiny, and trim in their uniforms, had given a talk about this man who had correctly predicted the San Francisco earthquake and who now said that there was a fifty-to-eighty-seven-to-a-hundred-per-cent chance of a big earthquake, maybe in New Madrid. They urged survival preparedness for the entire town.



In mid-October, the ad-hoc group's evaluation of Browning's prediction was released at a news conference and widely reported. Using the data Browning had provided for them, the committee members had tested his methods and found them no better than random guessing for predicting earthquakes, or, as one panel member, Duncan Agnew, said, "You could select the dates by throwing darts at a calendar, and you would do as well as Dr. Browning did." They also examined his track record. "This was important," Arch Johnston told me in discussing the report. "Even if his science wasn't valid, if he had accurately predicted seismic events—well, then, perhaps he knew something we didn't." They examined his claim to have predicted not only the San Francisco earthquake but other earthquakes and also volcano eruptions, and found in every case no evidence to support the claim.

In the TANSTAAFL video the interviewer asked Browning why it was that his work was not accepted by government or academic scientists. "I don't have any interaction with the government or academia," Browning replied. "I deal with people who solve problems, not people who make problems." And when the ad-hoc group asked him for his policy recommendations his written reply was "As to policy—I strongly recommend against one. The government has an unblemished record of screwing up everything it touches."

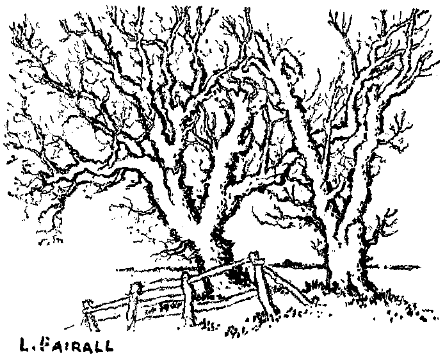
Stories about the ad-hoc group's news conference were followed, on October 21st, by a story discrediting Browning's chief supporter, David Stewart. According to the *Post-Dispatch*, Stewart had been involved in an analogous earthquake scare in North Carolina in the nineteen-seventies, this one involving a psychic. After the furor over that failed prediction died down, Stewart had been denied tenure at the University of North Carolina, where he taught geology. A few days after the *Post-Dispatch* story appeared, Stewart issued a statement saying he would no longer talk about Browning. He left a message for me with his secretary which said, "There is nothing true about the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* story of 21 October." But Stewart had cut a swath in the press in North Carolina, and a trail of news stories and interviews seemed to corroborate the *Post-Dispatch* story.

According to these, Stewart, who is a fifty-three-year-old Missourian, grew up hoping to be a minister, but while he was attending Missouri's Central Methodist College he found that his belief in reincarnation clashed with Methodism, and he dropped out of school. He hitchhiked around the country and ended up in an ashram near San Diego. One day, while he was practicing yoga, a message came to him to leave, to marry the woman with whom he believed himself to have been linked in another life, and to have five children. He did these things in the process of building a career and acquiring a Ph.D. in geophysics from the University of Missouri at Rolla. In 1971, he went to teach at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and became a popular professor. In 1975, he picked up a copy of the *National Enquirer* that told about supposedly successful earthquake predictions made by a psychic named Clarissa Bernhardt. (She also predicted that Nelson Rockefeller would become President in 1976, that Queen Elizabeth would abdicate, and that Johnny Carson would be a blackmail victim.) Impressed, Stewart invited Bernhardt to North Carolina to give a reading of the state's seismological condition. Using an airplane, Stewart and Bernhardt toured the state. Afterward, Bernhardt predicted that the Wilmington area would have a magnitude 8 earthquake within a year of her visit and most likely within a few days of January 17, 1976, a date that Stewart later said he had pressed her for. This prediction badly frightened the area's residents, because the Wilmington area was the site of a nuclear power plant. The earthquake did not happen. In 1977, after Stewart was denied tenure, he told an interviewer, "I have now discovered that science does not even touch the truth. . . . I may or may not remain active in the geologic sciences. Probably not. It was an interim thing in my life. I'll probably spend full time in the childbirth movement." After a tenure-decision appeal was turned down, Stewart ran a publishing company and wrote books on natural childbirth and midwifery. In 1988, he became the director of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, a group of earthquake-preparedness officials, and later that year he joined the faculty of Southeast Missouri State University. The next year, he became the director of the Center for Earthquake Studies. Three-quarters of his salary was paid by the university and the remainder by the Missouri Emergency Management Agency.

The evaluation of the Browning prediction and the news story about it had little impact. By that time, the earthquake seemed to have become an imperative. A friend of mine, a teacher in southern Missouri, told me, "I listen to my kids and their parents. They *want* an earthquake. They remember all that TV coverage of the one in San Francisco and it's almost as if they were saying, 'Hey, we could have one of those. Just like the big city. We could be on TV, and all.' " And by autumn many people and organizations had a stake in an earthquake, or at least the fear it generated. Sales of earthquake insurance jumped fifty per cent, totalling twenty-two million dollars in Missouri alone. A poll showed that half the population of the St. Louis area believed there would be an earthquake. Discount stores like Wal-Mart laid out displays of earthquake goods, taking as their guide special pull-out sections of newspapers across the region. Based on information from the Center for Earthquake Studies, these told what to do in an earthquake and what supplies to have available. The *Post-Dispatch* published a twenty-page earthquake-preparedness guide a week after it ran stories about the ad-hoc group's denigration of Browning's prediction and about Stewart's credentials. The section was stuffed with ads, including one for guns. The *Post-Dispatch* also ran a food-page special headed "Stocking an Earthquake Cupboard." By late October, you could pick up your free copy of "Tremor Tips" in many public places, including schools. It came from Stewart's center and was Browning-friendly. It contained no ads but listed supplies necessary for riding out an earthquake and told how to prepare the house for one. The Red Cross issued information to smaller newspapers and distributed whistles to children in New Madrid to wear around their necks. Travel agencies in southeastern Missouri were promoting "earthquake getaway weekends," and so was the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Springfield, Missouri, some two hundred miles west of New Madrid. When NBC broadcast a two-part TV movie called "The Big One," which wildly and deliciously distorted the destructiveness of earthquakes, Midwesterners gathered around their sets to watch, and their anxiety levels ratcheted upward. Critics accused NBC of bad timing, but its timing was nowhere near as bad as that of Missouri's Emergency Management Agency, which scheduled an earthquake drill, "Show Me Response '90," simulating the effects of a magnitude 7.6 earthquake, for December 1st and 2nd. The drill would make use of emergency personnel statewide, including the National Guard, which would be flying Cobra attack helicopters. State officials insisted that the drill date was just a coincidence, but no one I knew believed that. Arkansas scheduled a similar drill on the same dates, and over in Tennessee plans were made to warehouse the dead and dying in a high-security prison in the western part of the state. The St. Louis area planned drills of its own for December 2nd, directed from an underground command post, and enlisting the help of, among others, three sixteen-year-olds, who were assigned to struggle with firefighters after they were "rescued," and to scream, in order to contribute to "a general sense of panic," according to the newspaper report.

I left Washington after Thanksgiving to go back to Missouri. Arch Johnston, on hearing my plans, warned me that I would be in greater danger of harm driving between the two points than I would be in New Madrid on E Day. When I got to my farm, I felt as though I had stumbled into the countdown for Armageddon. Everywhere, I heard stories of people buying gas cans, batteries, even emergency power generators that cost thousands of dollars, stocking their pickups with emergency food and driving them out to the middle of their fields. I heard of white roses blooming blue out of season. The Mississippi River was said to be bubbling sulfur. A kindly, grandmotherly woman told me of the Bag 'Em and Tag 'Em Project: an "outfit" (unspecified) was said to have offered plastic bags and Magic Markers to the school in New Madrid so that overbusy undertakers could enlist the help of children to go out, pick up the dead, and label them as best they could. When I reacted with disgust and disbelief, she said, "Well, it *is* just awful, and they turned down the plastic bags. Took the Magic Markers, though." This was country cousin to a myth that floated around St. Louis earlier in the autumn—one about a major utility that was said to have ordered six thousand body bags with its name imprinted on them. And there were other rumors: the Disappearing Hitchhiker, that staple of modern myths, showed up in the Missouri bootheel, dressed in white, silent until he got out of a car; then he turned and said to the driver, "I'm here to warn you of the earthquake." Some reported that he was an angel. Blackbirds were said to be flying backward over the Mississippi River.

The Emergency Management Agency, which had originally been pleased to have the public's attention, admitted that it was overwhelmed. Its operations officer said, "I wish the panic had not gone along with the preparedness," and confessed that the office was now so overworked that it couldn't handle an emergency. The Earthquake Awareness Task Force announced that it had given out the wrong toll-free hot-line number, causing a travel agent (whose birthday was December 3rd) in California no end of trouble.



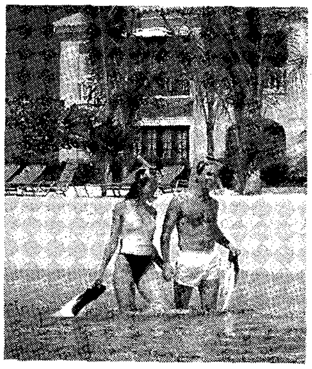
The wonder was that anyone was immune to earthquake fever. But I heard wisecracks about the real disaster that was due to come on December 4th, when everyone poured out his bottled water. And a ten-year-old friend of mine gave me a rundown on her school's preparedness plans. The local school, unlike others, was steadfastly staying open on December 3rd, but the children were being drilled, much to my informant's merriment. She giggled so hard she could barely speak when she told me about the kit given to each room with earthquake supplies in it, including a printed "HELP" sign that uninjured children were to throw out in the hallway to alert paramedics to the presence of wounded ones. The local director of emergency preparedness told me with disappointment that despite the fact that she'd put out collection cans, wrapped in yellow paper with a stunning black zigzag and labelled "Earthquake Disaster Fund," in seventeen places for five weeks, she'd collected only twelve dollars, and one can had been stolen. One Show-Me doubter had contributed two screws and a dead fly.

In an attempt to calm the populace, the state announced that Governor John Ashcroft, accompanied by Agriculture Director Charles Kruse (the man who had reluctantly given the O.K. for Browning to speak the year before), would tour the more interesting agricultural stops in the New Madrid area on December 3rd.

BROWNING had once described what it would be like on December 3rd. In the speech in which he supposedly forecast the San Francisco earthquake he also said that on December 3, 1990, "that high tide will be terrible . . . it will trigger volcanoes with the morning and evening suns, skies will glow pink."

On the morning of December 3rd,

Pleasures few will know.



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under cloudy skies, I was awakened by my cat walking on my face. That was no unusual animal behavior presaging an earthquake. He does it every morning. As I fed him and groped for coffee, I remembered that I had to go to an earthquake. I arrived in New Madrid too late to witness the Illinois radio-station crew broadcasting live from the back table at Tom's Grill, but I heard that they had brought with them a three-hundred-and-fifty-pound man and had him jump up and down to try to start the earthquake. News people filled the town. I counted fifty vehicles with satellite dishes and news logos, and then, like Dr. Robertson, who had counted the tremors of 1811-12, I got tired and quit. I looked local, so I was interviewed a lot. "Trouble is," one reporter told me, "everyone who is scared has left town and we can't get any good quotes from the ones who are here." The school had closed. Noranda Aluminum had promised a smoked turkey to any employee who showed up for work. I met the Los Angeles *Times* man. I heard about a reporter from a newspaper in Prague, Czechoslovakia. I looked in at Hap's Bar and Grill, which had begun a daylong Shake, Rattle, and Roll Party at 6 A.M. with beer and a bottomless pot of gumbo, and I could see no one who didn't look like a reporter. A young woman asked me to sign a notebook and tell where I was from. By noontime, she had two hundred signatures. By early afternoon, the museum was sold out of T-shirts. Inside the museum, I found a psychologist from California perched on a chair. He looked as though he were bustling even while sitting still. He had come to deal with "pre-trauma stress in children," he told me, and he handed me his press kit. I asked him what he made of the Bag 'Em and Tag 'Em Project. He waved his hand dismissively. "Oh, *that* was *last* week's rumor," he said. "This week, it's extra embalming fluid for the mortuaries. These children are frightened. They'll tell you they aren't, but I know kids." He called a little girl over. "You know what to do in an earthquake?" he asked her as he threw a yellow rubber duck up in the air. She stared at him. "What's that?" he prompted. "A duck?" she said. "That's right. Just duck," he said, laughing heartily, if singly. He pulled out a big, fuzzy green hand puppet. "This," he said in an aside to me, "is how we transform fear into anger." To the girl he said, "This is Iben Browning. Don't you want to punch him in the nose?" The little girl looked at him with incredulity and pity, that merciless gaze of childhood, and walked away.

Outside, although it was cold and windy, the town had taken on the air of a street party. Some nearby residents had driven into town to look at the media people and their equipment and preserve the scene on their own camcorders. Others stood in knots on street corners and were interviewed repeatedly. Some fought back. Lynn Bock, a town lawyer, strode into a restaurant and, peering through the viewfinder of his camcorder, pointed it at a table full of journalists. "O.K., everyone," he commanded. "Look right into the camera and, one by one, tell me who you are, where you're from, and who you work for." I watched journalists scuttle after Governor Ashcroft and Senator Christopher Bond, who had also shown up. And after a while I drove back home.

The New Madrid Seismic Zone was uncharacteristically quiet all that day, although there had been a magnitude 1 and a magnitude 2 the previous day. They were just routine, too small to be noticed except by seismographs. There were a few largish earthquakes recorded that day—5.0 to 5.5—but they were far away from any place Browning had mentioned in his predictions: New Caledonia, Tonga, and northern Colombia. And nowhere in the world during the five-day period he had allowed himself was there an earthquake of magnitude 6 or greater.

Iben Browning took his telephone off the hook.

There was one earthquake casualty. An eighty-two-year-old woman in Sparta, in south-central Missouri, following the directions in "Tremor Tips," had been removing breakables from a shelf and had fallen from a step stool and broken her hip.

A week later, David Stewart stepped down as director of the Center for Earthquake Studies and asked to be reassigned to full-time teaching.

A neighbor told me, "The next time some government feller tells me to fill up my pickup with peanut butter and drive it out into the middle of my field, I'm not a-gonna do it."

—SUE HUBBELL

# AROUND CITY HALL

## *Gulfs*

A FEW days before Desert Shield became Desert Storm, Mayor David Dinkins was asked by a reporter if he was greatly worried about the fact that, if war were to come in the Middle East, New York would be a prime target on terrorists' lists. The Mayor said with a smile that he would like to remind the reporter that this city has the finest Police Department in the world. On the following day, January 12th, the stabbing of the Reverend Al Sharpton raised serious questions about the vigilance of New York's finest. For many months, Sharpton has been less visible (and less audible) than he had been in the past. It is hard to keep shouting that blacks have no chance against the white political establishment when New York, whose population is about twenty-five per cent black, has now elected a black mayor. Sharpton-led marches had become less frequent, including those from the largely black neighborhoods of central Brooklyn to the Italian-American section of Bensonhurst to protest the fatal attack, in August, 1989, on a black teen-ager, Yusuf Hawkins, by a band of young Bensonhurst residents. However, the pudgy Sharpton, with his large mop of hair, had continued to be as recognizable a figure on the national and even the international scene as any New Yorker. Although he has railed constantly against the victimization of blacks, it seems likely that not many people had pictured him personally as a victim of white violence. Yet on January 13th local front pages reported that he had been stabbed with a kitchen knife by a white resident of Bensonhurst, an unemployed construction worker named Michael Riccardi. Sharpton and about a hundred of his followers, including the father of Yusuf Hawkins, had been standing in a Bensonhurst schoolyard getting ready for the twenty-ninth Sharpton-led march in that neighborhood, this one to protest the sentences handed out the day before to two of Yusuf Hawkins' attackers, which Sharpton and those gathered with him believed were unduly light. About a hundred policemen were in the schoolyard with them. Nevertheless, Riccardi was able to wander in, pull out his knife, and stab Sharpton in the chest. The assailant was grabbed not by the police but by Hawkins' father. The city's Emergency Medical Service did not live up to its bragged-about speedy response, and Sharpton, bleeding heavily, was taken to the hospital in a friend's car. It was evident soon after he got there that the wound would not be fatal. Still, his supporters could accurately describe the stabbing as an assassination attempt.

In the hospital, Sharpton was visited by the Mayor, with whom he had long been on poor terms. He had urged local blacks not to vote for Dinkins, complaining that Dinkins had criticized the handling of the Tawana Brawley case by him and others. Police Commissioner Lee Brown also came to see Sharpton. Bishop Thomas Daily, of the Brooklyn Catholic diocese, said prayers for him in the Brooklyn cathedral. Attorney General Robert Abrams, whom Sharpton had denounced savagely for his direction of the grand-jury proceedings that found the alleged rape of Tawana Brawley to have been a hoax, sent him a get-well telegram. The Reverend Jesse Jackson hurried up from Washington. He said during his visit, "In the final analysis, there is no security against the evil that lurks in the hearts of men"—raising the question of whether his recent election as the District of Columbia's so-called "shadow senator" had caused him to look up some old Lamont Cranston records. Sharpton expressed the view that the attack on him had been committed under the direction of the same people who had sent blacks and Latinos to the Gulf, saying, "Isn't it strange that, right before the deadline on Saddam Hussein . . . a man plunges a knife into the chest of a freedom fighter for all to see?" A publication of the New Alliance, a fringe political party that Sharpton sometimes works with, began a paragraph, "Four days after the attempt on Sharpton's life, President George Bush launched . . . the largest bombing raid in the history of the world." The front page of another New Alliance publication, using red ink to simulate spattered blood, ran two stories, side by side, under the huge headline "BLOOD": "in the sands" and "in the schoolyard." Sharpton, however, in an interview from his hospital bed three days after the stabbing, urged that there be calm all around, and that under no circumstances should any of his admirers consider trying to avenge the attack on him. "I've been non-violent all my life," he said. He thanked the children in the Bensonhurst school for sending him flowers. The Mayor, in turn, thanked Sharpton for his relatively peaceable approach. On the day of the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s birthday, Dinkins greeted Sharpton at City Hall. Some observers there and elsewhere expressed a certain awe at the realization that the most conciliatory and statesmanlike local

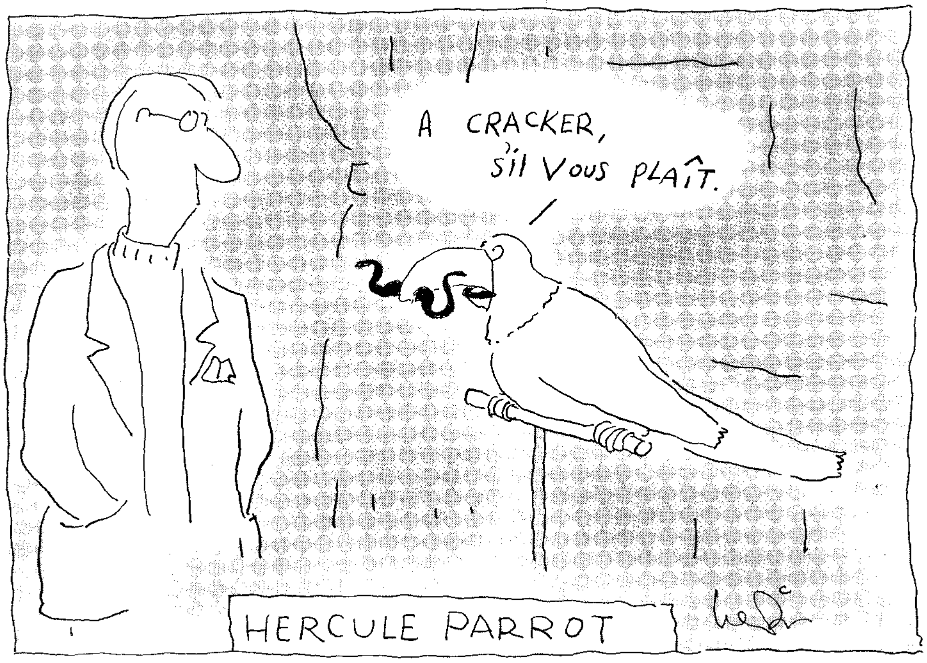

figure of that week had been the Reverend Al.

THE day after the attack on Iraq, the twenty-four pages of the *Times'* main news section carried not a single account of events in the city other than New Yorkers' reaction to their country's being at war. Every day, Mayor David Dinkins' press office prepares a series of summaries of the coverage on the local television stations of developments of interest to City Hall. From January 17th—the day after the war began—through January 21st, each of the summaries read, "No news pertaining to city government. Extensive coverage of Desert Storm continues." In most American towns, the eclipse of interest in local government was surely much the same. The lack of attention to what they were up to seemed notable to many of those in charge at City Hall, however, since January 16th had been anything but an ordinary news day there. That morning, the Mayor had presented his twenty-nine-billion-dollar preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year, which projected a gap of two billion dollars between revenues and expenditures, and called for a five-hundred-and-eighty-million-dollar increase in taxes, deep cuts in most city services, and the layoff of sixteen thousand full-time or part-time city workers. Although the announcement of this dramatic and painful city austerity lying ahead did not hit the front pages, one way or another it reached many New Yorkers: the next morning, war or no war, they piled out of the subway stations near City Hall carrying placards and banners to express their outrage over the threats to shut down libraries and school programs, and over the layoffs—in some cases, doubtless, their own.

From now on, staging demonstrations of any kind in the neighborhood will be a lot harder. In the past, New Yorkers who work in that part of town were free to walk across the plaza just below City Hall's steps to get to their next destination or, in summer, to gather there for twice-a-week concerts—jazz, salsa, show tunes—at which some of them might eat their lunch, sitting in the sun on City Hall's steps and tapping their feet, giving the seat of New York's twenty-nine-billion-dollar government an almost small-town air. It is, however, a small town in which nearly a third of the current residents were born in some other country. The often raw and intense ethnic, racial, and religious loyalties they have brought with them—of which New York already had a large supply—insure that when the city is engaged in an international war, as it now is, the local scene will be more turbulent than ever. For some, City Hall plaza is full of the ghosts of visitors from budget times past—for example, a member of the Board of Education who dramatized the schools' need for additional city money by leading a large band of schoolchildren in a chant of "Give me an 'M'! Give me an 'O'! Give me an 'N'! . . . " and the state assemblyman who brought along a small elephant, draped in white, to represent what an unwelcome housing development might turn into. Now barricades abound at City Hall, and at both ends of the plaza—the entrance on the west leads to Broadway and the one on the east to the Brooklyn Bridge—crash cars are stationed, manned by cops, who move them back a few feet only to allow entry to authorized personnel. The chanters (and the elephant) will have to take their shows somewhere else. The week before the attack on Iraq, Police Commissioner Brown had opened an Anti-Terrorist Command Center on the eighth floor of Police Headquarters, a few blocks northeast of City Hall. There are perhaps two hundred thousand Arabs in the city, and their main drag is Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. Even before the war began, F.B.I. agents were circulating in the area, asking what residents there knew about their neighbors. Counting black Muslims, the local Muslim population may, by some estimates, be as high as three hundred thousand.

For some New Yorkers, the war was not entirely bad news. In the arcades around Times Square, customers, paying fifty cents to start, played video games in which they could pretend to bomb Baghdad or otherwise dispose of Mideastern-looking terrorist types—but then they had been doing this for years. The makers of such games, and also of plastic soldiers, have long known that it is safe to encourage the wiping out of enemy villains that look vaguely Middle Eastern rather than, say, black or Asian or Jewish—and so avoid bringing any of the various anti-defamation agencies down upon them. By next week, they may have a game that labels the enemy Saddam Hussein. For local residents who were nervous about venturing out on the streets in a world of real terrorists, the Avalon Hill company's game called Gulf Strike, with Desert Shield is said to have had a big surge in sales. The game, in which American troops are pitted against those of Iraq, "is heavily favored toward the Americans," according to an Avalon spokesman. It was devised in 1983, and modified last fall, by Mark Harmon, who does consulting work for the Pentagon—which, he has said, is very interested in war games.

There was a happy sight at another local address, Wall Street, on the morning of January 17th. The Associated Press caught a Seaport Securities stock trader laughing with joy over developments: the stock market had had its second-biggest gain in history—nearly a hundred points. (It calmed down later.) Wall Streeters pointed out that because of the eight-hour time difference between Iraq and New York the war's start could not have been better orchestrated for United States financial markets. The allied planes took off for Iraq less than an hour after the markets closed in New York on January 16th, and General Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed reporters on all the good news from the front just a few moments before the ringing of the Stock Exchange's opening bell the following morning.

The war also proved to be a stroke of good fortune for local papers—especially the tabloids, all of which increased their daily runs. The *Post* had already benefitted substantially from the fact that *Daily News* employees had been on strike since October 25th and the paper was being put out by what the *News* management euphemistically described as "replacement workers." The day after Desert Storm began, the *Post* (which was not expected to make it through last September until *Post* employees, especially reporters, saved it from closing down by taking substantial cuts in pay) reported that it had distributed more than a million papers, an increase of nearly two hundred thousand. The headline was "WAR!" and the subhead "ALLIED JETS RIP IRAQ, KUWAIT, SADDAM'S AIR FORCE KO'D." (They've calmed down since.) The *Wall Street Journal* headline was its second-largest—second only to that on December 8, 1941.

MANY of the responses here to the outbreak of war were generational, as, surely, they were elsewhere. In living rooms, in bars, around water coolers, one could hear those for whom this is the first war being enlightened—almost compulsively—by those who wanted to tell them about how it was in the Vietnam era. Korean War veterans in any crowd were in danger of having their memories publicly edited by anyone on hand who was steeped in "M*A*S*H" reruns. Only those who remembered the Second World War were in a position to remind those around them that before long, if this war went on for a while, whatever anyone proposed—including local governments seeking more money from Washington—would get the answer "Don't you know there's a war on?" In many gatherings, there was a sense that some people present were already tightening up and coloring their stories of just what they were doing when they heard that the war was on. Only those with Second World War memories could chime in on this one, there being no such definitive initial moment—at least, in most recollections—for the start of either the Vietnam or the Korean War. There seemed to be little chance that any strong Reagan-Bush admirers would turn up to ask where anyone was when Grenada broke out. It was just after that war ended that George Bush commented, memorably, "It was a wonderful week for Americans—except of course for those two hundred and forty-one marines in Lebanon." That comment came to some minds during his optimistic State of the Union speech, delivered to Congress on January 29th, just as—in what might be the beginning of a bloody land war—eleven marines were brought down in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

On January 27th (Super Bowl Sunday), the members of the Riverside Church, which is the family church of the Rockefellers, and whose facilities include a twenty-story tower, voted to

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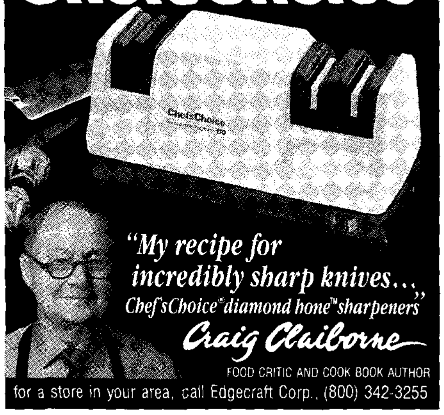

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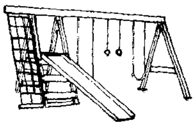

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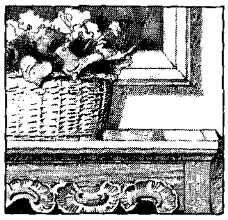

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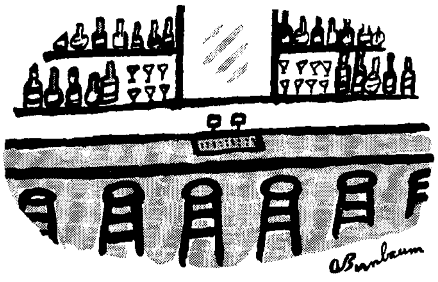
offer sanctuary to military personnel who find they are conscientious objectors, and who would be, in the eyes of the military, deserters. The city's first major demonstration to voice full approval of the war—the police put its numbers at five thousand—was held the same day. It didn't surprise anyone in town that it took place on Staten Island, the most pastoral (relatively speaking) of the city's five boroughs—and, as black and Latino leaders who oppose the Persian Gulf war pointed out to reporters the next day, the borough with by far the smallest minority-group population. Also held on January 27th was a memorial service for Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr., the first war casualty from the city—indeed, from the state—whose Harrier jet had crashed during a training session over the Gulf. After his death, the big headline on the front page of the local Latino daily *El Diario* was "SANGRE HISPANA" ("Hispanic blood"). The service was held at St. Anselm's Church in the South Bronx, where Rivera grew up in the projects. Among those who attended were a delegation of Vietnam veterans and several local politicians, not including Dinkins, who was in Tampa that day in a sky box at the Super Bowl. Among the politicians at the memorial service were Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx borough president, and Jose Serrano, the representative from the South Bronx. On January 12th, Serrano had been among the hundred and eighty-three House members who voted against authorizing force in the Gulf. He said at the service that he felt "anger at myself, because perhaps I didn't do enough to stop this war from happening," and added that he would continue to oppose it.

IN the January 12th congressional vote on the authorization of force, the divisions among New Yorkers were sharper than those among members of many other delegations. A *Newsday* poll taken in the four days after the war began showed that local residents' approval of the Iraq attack was somewhat lower than that of the nation as a whole. Nationally, support for the President's decision ranged, in various polls, from seventy to eighty per cent. In this city, the percentage approving it averaged 58.9. The number dropped between January 17th (sixty-three per cent) and January 20th (fifty-five per cent). Among white New Yorkers over the four-day period, full approval of the attack was 65.7 per cent; among blacks, thirty-eight per cent had reservations about it and twenty-two per cent opposed it outright. In the January 12th vote, the state's two senators were split. Alfonse D'Amato approved the authorization and, after the attack, called for "blasting Saddam Hussein off the face of the earth." On January 25th, in furtherance of this aim, he left for Israel, where he urged Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to take care of the matter if the United States didn't get around to it. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan voted for further reliance on sanctions. After the war began, he said, "In six days' or in six weeks' time, we will know a lot about the next thirty years."

Of the fourteen members of the House from this city, only five supported the war authorization. They included the two Republicans in the delegation—Susan Molinari, of Staten Island, and Bill Green, of Manhattan—and, among the Democrats, Gary Ackerman, of Queens; Eliot Engel, of the Bronx; and Stephen Solarz, of Brooklyn, who was a co-sponsor of the resolution to authorize military force. Solarz's prominent role on the hawk side of a war issue was considered especially notable because he was first elected to Congress as a vigorous opponent of the Vietnam War. "The Gulf is not Vietnam. The desert is not a jungle," he explained to a reporter for the Bay Ridge *Courier*, a Brooklyn paper. His is the most Jewish district in Congress, and he once observed that, politically speaking, his getting federal money for Israel was "the functional equivalent" of a Western representative's getting money for a dam. However, he said, he would have taken the stand he did on the Mideast situation "if Israel did not exist." Representative Charles Schumer's district, also heavily Jewish, adjoins that of Solarz. Schumer voted the other way. Representative Thomas Manton, of Queens, is the only Irish-American in the House delegation from a city in which Irish-Americans once treated local politics as their wholly owned subsidiary. He surprised some of his colleagues by voting for further negotiations in the Middle East. Regarded as a strong conservative in most matters, he explained that his district includes the neighborhood of Woodside, which, he told the local weekly *Irish Voice*, "lost more young men in Vietnam than any other town in the nation. My constituents know just how costly war can be." All of the black Democrats in the House, including the four from New York—Charles Rangel, of Manhattan; Major Owens and Edolphus Towns, of Brooklyn; and Floyd Flake, of Queens—voted against the President. (Gary Franks, the black representative elected last year in Connecticut on the Republican line, voted with Bush.) After the attack on Iraq, Rangel called it "a sad day," which would be written down in history as "insanity." Major Owens had pointed out that a large percentage of those whose lives would be at risk in the Persian Gulf were poor members of minority groups, and had said he felt that not to support sanctions against Iraq for a while longer "would make me an accessory to murder."



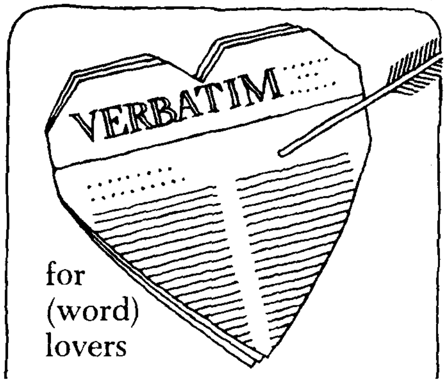
On January 10th, nineteen of the thirty-five members of New York's City Council had signed a letter to President Bush urging that he continue diplomatic negotiations and resort to stronger sanctions rather than to "an act of war," which, the letter said, would be "a match which would light up a wild fire." On January 15th, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman held a press conference at City Hall to express their opposition to "the impending war." Messinger's statement said that the United States should not abandon "tragically, prematurely, the policy of coördinated international sanctions against Iraq." A war, she predicted, would very likely "escalate into a regional war involving Israel and other states." A week later, on January 22nd, the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution condemning Saddam Hussein, supporting President Bush as commander-in-chief and "our dedicated and courageous troops," and condemning "the unprovoked attacks against the civilian population of Israel." The resolution was delivered to Israel's consul-general, Uriel Savir, at a ceremony in the City

Council chamber. After accepting it, he promised, to loud applause, that Israel would surely retaliate against Saddam Hussein, and added, "As to how, when, and where, let him guess." A yellow ribbon culminating in a huge yellow rosette was draped around the podium, and all the Council members present wore yellow ribbons. Fortunately, these did not clash with the blue ribbons that, last spring, Mayor Dinkins had asked New Yorkers to wear to demonstrate their support of his campaign for racial and ethnic unity in the city.

Despite the unanimous vote for the City Council's resolution, only thirteen Council members attended the ceremony. Some of those present had signed the letter to the President urging further reliance on sanctions. However, not one of the six black Council members or the three Latino members was there. The January 19th edition of the *Amsterdam News*, the most widely read of the local black weeklies, had run an editorial, beginning on its front page, under the headline "GULF: WHOSE WAR IS IT?" The editorial, written by the paper's publisher, Wilbert Tatum, said, "Our children wait in the Gulf to fill body bags in larger numbers that are far and away more disproportionate to our numbers in the general population." Their plight had come about, Tatum said, because "the best job that most young Blacks could get in an increasingly re-segregating and racist society was in Uncle Sam's volunteer army." Four days after the attack on Iraq—and three days after the landing of the first Scud missiles in Tel Aviv—a rally was held in front of the United Nations in support of Israel. Among the politicians who attended were Schumer, Moynihan, and Messinger—all staunch supporters of Israel. All of them, David Seifman of the *Post* reported, were booed by the crowd, clearly because of the position they had taken favoring negotiations in an effort to avoid war. Messinger, who some New Yorkers believe could be the city's first woman mayor, got an especially loud round of boos. (This was a few days before Clayton Yeutter, the incoming chairman of the Republican National Committee, said he hoped that voters would hold accountable those Democrats who had voted against the resolution giving the President the authority to wage war against Iraq. "They picked the wrong side," he said.) Messinger, who had looked quite shaken by the jeers of her former allies and admirers, later issued a statement saying, "In times of war, everyone wants clear-cut answers. Morally, politically, and strategically, this war offers no such clarity. . . . I have no easy answers, no sound bite that adequately explains what I feel, fear, and pray for."

FOR New York's Mayor, the first month of this year—like most of the last half of 1990, his first year in office—was one big downer. Late in January, a story by the *Times* bureau chief, Todd Purdum, described what it called Dinkins' "sea of troubles," under a headline that in the early edition referred to his administration's "malaise"—a word carrying heavy political freight. (Possibly on the theory that the freight was too heavy, the word was changed in later editions to "quandary.") Every few days, city revenue figures sagged further. The City Council kept challenging the Mayor's authority, in some cases raising questions about what it charged were coverups of ineptitude in the Mayor's handling of issues involving public safety, such as the closing of fire companies and the deterioration of bridges. Crime continued to surge; the local homicide total for 1990 was over twenty-two hundred. The Mayor's major government initiative since he took office, a billion-eight-hundred-million-dollar anti-crime plan, which requires state legislation, continued to be blocked in Albany—four months after he announced it, with huge fanfare, including hundreds of invited guests and arrays of flags. (The Dinkins administration is unusually partial to flags.) His state-of-the-city speech, on January 8th (eighteen flags this time), turned out to be a dreary litany of familiar complaints about Washington's cruel indifference to New York's needs, along with references to the city's being a gorgeous mosaic. At one point, Dinkins had to stop and prompt his invited guests to applaud. The next day, a long-awaited report was delivered by a special counsel appointed by the Department of Investigation to study accusations left over from the 1989 mayoral campaign involving Dinkins' sale of cable-company stock to his son. The charges had been made by Roger Ailes, the political adviser to Dinkins' Republican opponent, who described Dinkins as trying to move into City Hall "with his integrity around his ankles." The Mayor's office had expected that the report would clear the Mayor of all wrongdoing. However, Elkan Abramowitz, the counsel, said that it could not do that, since the possibility that the Mayor had lied under oath about the authenticity of a document that, it appeared, might not be authentic had not been entirely dispelled. Though Ailes may not be involved in the next mayoral campaign, the stock-sale issue will likely be a standard reference among Dinkins' 1993 opponents.

The number of politicians who seem to be already revving up for that race grows each day, as the impression spreads that Dinkins will be a one-term mayor. It was a season when good news for the city of the sort that would allow the Mayor to bask in a bit of its spotlight would be highly welcome at City Hall. Fortunately, there was such news. The New York Giants had a rocky last few weeks of the regular football season but then won the playoffs and headed for the Super Bowl to take on the Buffalo Bills. They won, of course, for the second time in four years, defeating by a one-point margin the Bills, who had never won the Bowl (never won *anything*, they frequently complained), and who had been the favorites. The victory may have delighted the Mayor and most football fans in this city, but it won't ease the upstate-downstate hostilities that are often a big factor in preventing the city from wresting favorable legislation from Albany. The Bills had at least one prominent downstate friend: Governor Mario Cuomo supported them and, after the game, having sent a congratulatory telegram to the Giants, hailed the Bills as what he called New York State's "only" entry in the Super Bowl—his point being that the Giants, although they are known as the New York Giants (and after they won in Tampa the music out of the sound booth was "New York, New York"), have in fact played across the Hudson River, in New Jersey's Meadowlands, since 1976. "They showed more class, more character, coming up one point short than most teams show in victory," the Governor said, and he flew up to Buffalo for their losers' party, which was attended by twenty-five thousand people. Cuomo,



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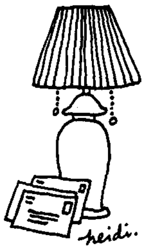
as he has often said, feels close to losers (though not necessarily those he himself defeats at the polls). Before he won election as governor in 1982, he had lost every race he had run in, and the experience of winning was almost alien to him. He said then, "I know the other feeling so well."

At City Hall, Dinkins, when he got back from Tampa, explained that there wasn't enough money in the city treasury for a ticker-tape parade. (The estimated cost of one is about a million dollars, most of it for police overtime.) In 1987, his predecessor, Edward Koch, had declined to throw a parade for what he called a "foreign" team —referring to the New Jersey connection. However, Dinkins said there would be a big ceremony for the Giants at City Hall, at which he would give them the key to the city. Though he saved on police overtime, it cost the city anyhow. City workers spent much of a day building bleachers, a stage, and a place for the podium from which the Mayor would present the players with the key. The Giants' main office then reminded the Mayor's office that several days earlier it had turned down such a party, out of respect for the troops in the Gulf. The Mayor's people had gone ahead anyhow. The *Post*, whose editions marked "WAR EXTRA!" have been selling nicely, put out a sports extra showing the city workers laboriously dismantling what they had built the day before—a scene that contributed to the impression, which the Dinkins administration has been trying to fight off, that it can't do anything right.



It was probably just as well that the party for the Giants fell through, since the Mayor was busy getting ready for his trip to Israel. Until the attack on Iraq, Dinkins had publicly favored sanctions in the Gulf. After January 16th, he spoke of the need not to abandon the troops. Many of Dinkins' 1989 supporters were leaders of major city-employee unions, most of them black or Hispanic, like the majority of their unions' members. Dinkins has often said that he would not be mayor today without their help. Led by Stanley Hill, of District Council 37, the largest city-employee union, and Dennis Rivera, of Local 1199 of the hospital-workers union, they kept urging him to sponsor a huge peace vigil at City Hall. A union leader reminded him, "These are our members' sons and daughters that are serving in the Gulf." The night the first Scud missiles fell on Israel, however, Dinkins had been at the home of Savir, the Israeli consul-general—an experience that was said to have had "quite a dramatic effect" on the Mayor. He made an appearance at the pro-Israel demonstration at the U.N. on January 20th. The next day, when Dinkins began to speak at a rally in City Hall Park in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s birthday, he was booed and jeered at by some in the heavily black (and strongly anti-war) crowd who accused him of favoring the war.

On January 25th, the Mayor announced that he would travel to Israel on Saturday, February 2nd, and return on February 4th, explaining that, "as the Mayor of the city with the largest Jewish community anywhere in the world," he would be reaffirming New York's historic solidarity with the State of Israel, and also, he hoped, might "bolster morale" there. He would be accompanied by Consul-General Savir, Representative Rangel, and the heads of several Jewish organizations (who were paying the bills, except for those of eight city policemen who serve as Dinkins' bodyguards). The Reverend Calvin Butts, the pastor of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, who is believed to be one of those New Yorkers who are contemplating a challenge to Dinkins in 1993, said that if Dinkins and Rangel went anywhere they "should go where the troops are . . . large numbers of African-American men and women . . . who have no business being there." His advice to the Mayor was "to stay home and take care of the war on the streets of New York." Dinkins' tentative schedule for his thirty-three-hour visit to Israel included meetings with President Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Shamir, and Foreign Minister David Levy, a visit to the Western Wall, and eight or nine other morale-boosting events. After that, it would be back to dodging shots from the City Council, the press, the unions, the budget-time seekers of "M-O-N-E-Y," and other contributors to the malaise—or, for that matter, the quandary—that awaits him back home.

—ANDY LOGAN

# BOOKS

## *Ancestral Rhyme*

IN one of the first glimpses we have of Helen, the heroine of Derek Walcott's book-length poem "Omeros" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25), she walks barefoot along a beach on her native Antillean island of St. Lucia, singing a Beatles song. The tune is "Yesterday," and the line she focusses on strikes a note of understated wistfulness: "Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away." Helen is reflecting upon the upheavals of romance—as well she might, for she, in her surpassing beauty, is a heartbreaker. An "ebony girl" in a "lemon frock," she has recently been fired from her job as a servant to a pair of British expatriates, Dennis and Maud Plunkett. Dennis, a retired major who has taken up the disciplining of a new sort of troops—he has become a pig farmer—is silently mad about her. So are, silently or vociferously, most of the other men on the island, including a pair of fishermen whose rivalrous designs threaten to unravel the community's uneasy workaday calm.

Some forty pages farther along, we learn that the young woman's troubles were never "far away," as Walcott resurrects "Helens from an earlier time," whose lives were indentured to an inhumane colonialism. He vividly summons those forebears of hers who, working for pittances under the scorching Caribbean sun, once carried staggering loads of anthracite down from the hills to the holds of imperial freighters:

Hell was built on those hills. In that country of coal
without fire, that inferno the same colour
as their skins and shadows, every labouring soul

climbed with her hundredweight basket, every load for
one copper penny, balanced erect on their necks
that were tight as the liner's hawsers from the weight.

The carriers were women, not the fair, gentler sex.

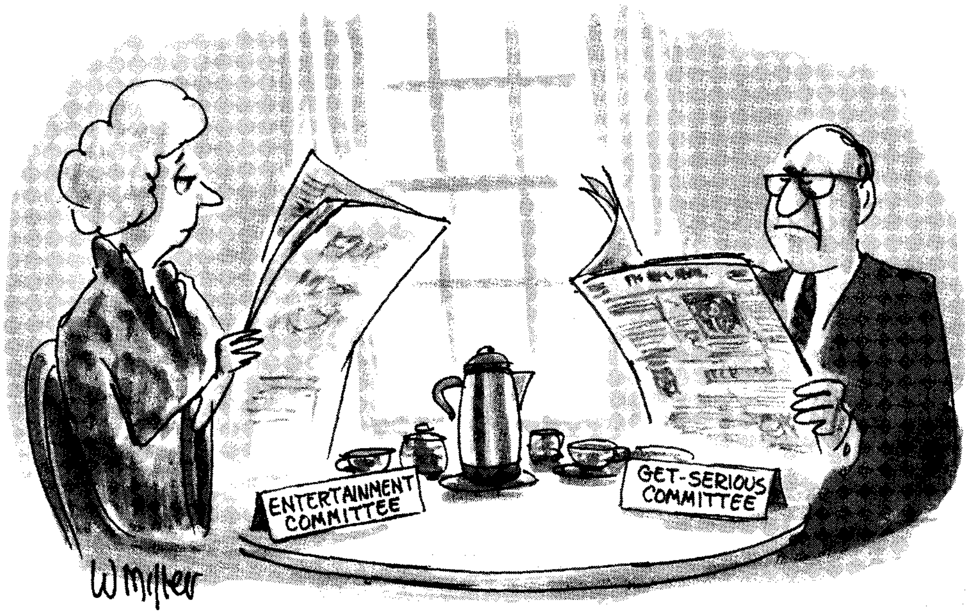
As she sings, Helen is ruefully conscious of an unwanted burden: she is pregnant and does not know who the father is. But she bears, simultaneously and unwittingly, a greater burden still. She, like all the dark-skinned islanders, carries the weight of a history of generations of cruelty and chicanery, most of which has passed away unchronicled and unrighted. Through Helen, and Helen's precursors, Walcott ventures back more than four hundred years, to that "yesterday" when the first African slaves were transported to the Caribbean.

Yet his backward-looking muse does not halt there. He equates the Caribbean and the Mediterranean—both belonging to a "sea without time"—and thereby likens his Helen to Homer's, and his squabbling fishermen to the warring Greeks and Trojans. The whole of "Omeros" (the title is Homer's name in Greek) is anchored to "The Iliad" and, in a lesser degree, "The Odyssey." Only a page after Helen strolls the beach, Walcott forges a litany of "yesterday"s, and St. Lucia dissolves into the fields of Troy:

And yesterday these shallows were the Scamander,
and armed shadows leapt from the horse, and the bronze nuts
were helmets, Agamemnon was the commander

of weed-bearded captains; yesterday, the black fleet
anchored there in the swift's road. . . .

Implicit in the undertaking of this colossal poem are a number of presuppositions, among them a root belief in the sustaining continuities of history. The links between ancient Greece and the modern Caribbean are regarded as genuine and artistically negotiable. No matter that the Greeks were empire builders and the Antilleans are portrayed as the pawns of new empire-makers, the multinational corporations. Both peoples are seafarers, and Walcott makes much of the notion that to a marine community the daily nudge and drain of the tides overrides more recent life rhythms. His characters may watch American TV programs or dance to reggae music or hot-rod down the streets, but all such trappings of modern life vanish before the larger reality of the "ocean's voice." Similarly, Walcott confederates the two cultures on the basis of their pagan convictions; they are alike in inhabiting islands flush with ghosts and natural spirits. "Omeros" opens in a state of what might be called vegetal panic: jungle trees are quaking in fear as islanders hack their way toward them in search of trunks that might make seaworthy canoes. Finally, Walcott assumes that his dark-skinned islanders cultivate a spoken language of sufficient beauty, punch, and dexterity to render it suitable for the elevated dignities of an epic poem. Needless to say, there is in this assumption a touch of the antiquated. The broad consensus among English-language poets is that the eclogue is no longer viable. The conventions that deemed it plausible for the common man, in the guise of shepherd or fisherman, to declaim in elaborately



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patterned verse died some time ago, perhaps when the last of Frost's rugged New Englanders traded in his Vermont sheep farm for a rent-with-option-to-buy condo in Sarasota. Fortunately, news of the form's demise has not yet reached Walcott, who presents his fishermen, taxi-drivers, domestics, and barkeeps as natural poets. To be sure, he has fun with their linguistic uncertainties—their solecisms and malaprops and misspellings. But make no mistake: he is singing a song of praise to the mettle and resilience of a tongue that has wandered far from those shores where the King's English is spoken.

It becomes evident after only a couple of pages that Walcott in "Omeros" has set himself a pair of sizable tasks, one a matter of content and the other of technique. As regards the former, he must have recognized from the outset the grave risk that the parallels between Homer's Greeks and Walcott's Antilleans would, in the long haul, grow artificial and contrived. (It is a danger he has chosen to confront head on, going as far as to name the two fishermen who battle over Helen's affections Achille and Hector.) In terms of technique, Walcott has likewise deliberately courted our eventual fatigue, by deciding to work in three-line stanzas whose rhymes evoke Dante's terza rima. In English, as opposed to rhyme-rich Italian, the rhymed tercet has proved to be of scant utility over the centuries, its currency typically restricted to the short lyric. A potential reader is therefore entitled to hesitate before embarking on an epic poem set in the modern Caribbean which draws heavily for subject upon Homer and for music upon Dante. But these are reservations likely to fade straightaway in the presence of Walcott's sure-handed stanzas. The welcome truth is that in "Omeros," his ninth full-length book of verse, Walcott has overcome a number of seeming insurmountables. Even those readers who, like me, have admired much in his previous work may well find "Omeros" an inspiring and enlivening surprise.

ALTHOUGH Homer lends his name to its title and many details to its plot, "Omeros" is hardly a mere retelling or updating of "The Iliad" or "The Odyssey." "Omeros" moves on a wide diversity of tides and currents, and the bulk of the book is devoted to incidents and meditations that have an exiguous link, at best, to Homer's epics. Its narrative encompasses a nineteenth-century woman pioneer on the Great Plains; an eighteenth-century midshipman ancestor of Dennis Plunkett's; an aborted Antillean political campaign; a sunken treasure; a hallucinatory pilgrimage to Africa; a faith healer; and a contemporary poet—not so much a persona of the author as the author himself—who ponders modern urban life in Boston and Toronto. In dreams, in memory, sometimes in the flesh, Walcott's characters venture onto at least four continents and across at least four centuries.

Generally, what unites these far-flung souls and objects is the sea (or its agonizing absence, as when Major Plunkett relives the campaign against Rommel in the Sahara). In Greek mythology, it was of course a body of water—the navigable Styx—that conjoined the living and the dead, and Walcott has solid precedents for supposing that an epic poet should feel at liberty to travel by means of the mind's waterways from one end of creation to the other. Still, there are moments when, in aspiring to be all things to all people, "Omeros" winds up chugging like an overburdened motorboat. The Great Plains sections, in particular, seem not only narratively peripheral but thematically superfluous. They feel didactic, as though composed chiefly to highlight our nation's betrayal of the Indian. But do they—one must finally ask—add anything noteworthy? Hasn't the issue of the Old World's pillage of the New already been broached, unignorably, by Walcott's decision to center the poem on impoverished Antilleans? One recalls the lesson that, half a century ago, the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh encapsulated in his sonnet "Epic," in which Homer's ghost materializes in order to point out that "The Iliad" was fabricated from nothing but a "local row." Even for the epic writer, Kavanagh reminds us, largeness needn't begin large; the trick is not in the scale of the tale but in the skill of the telling.

"Omeros" is most moving, significantly, when it stays close to home. The extended interludes in which the poet converses with the ghost of his father are indelibly drawn: spooky and graceful and loving and wrenchingly sad. Although the poet is, implicitly, an eminent man (he's the author, after all, of the brilliant feat of learning that is "Omeros"), and the father in his lifetime was, explicitly, a gifted man whose career was hamstrung by poverty and race prejudice, the place of honor throughout the meeting belongs to the father. He is at once taskmaster, supporter, and counsellor. It is from him that we learn of those earlier Helens who slaved under hundredweights of anthracite, and he is the one who—playing upon the multiple meanings of "feet"—tautens the cords that bind the poet's burden to the poet's craft. He reveals to his son a method of fusing form and content:

Kneel to your load, then balance your staggering feet
and walk up that coal ladder as they do in time,
one bare foot after the next in ancestral rhyme.

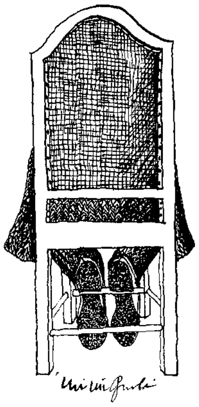
Because Rhyme remains the parentheses of palms
shielding a candle's tongue, it is the language's
desire to enclose the loved world in its arms;

or heft a coal-basket; only by its stages
like those groaning women will you achieve that height
whose wooden planks in couplets lift your pages

higher than those hills of infernal anthracite.

And yet as rich a character as the poet's father becomes, Major Plunkett may be a still more considerable artistic achievement, in part because he begins so unpromisingly. When we first see him, in his "khaki shirt and capacious shorts," he is wiping the froth of a Guinness from his "pensioned moustache." He looks, in brief, like an all too easy stereotype and target—the English-colonial "hanger-on"—and the reader naturally worries that Walcott's rage will get the better of him. But quickly, as the lineaments of Plunkett's life come clear—his bewilderment over Britain's geopolitical decline, his flair for puns, his unfulfilled dream of a freewheeling trip around the world, his taciturn grief in the face of his wife's illness—he takes on subtler pigments and finer shadings. Indeed, the tragedy that eventually sinks him, as he careens into a stunned widowerhood, is the book's most fully realized bereavement. We feel for him. And that a man who appeared destined to provide the poem with its villain instead becomes a stirring, weighty figure testifies to the deep sympathies that inform "Omeros." It's a bighearted book.

As a prosodic form, the rhymed tercet is no workhorse; it's nearer to a carrier pigeon. It offers only four self-contained rhyme schemes (AAx, AxA, xAA, AAA), as opposed to the fourteen available to the quatrain. Little wonder, then, its relative unemployment among English-language poets; and no surprise that Walcott, having accepted the challenge of fitting so straitened a form to so vast a project, has resorted to a great deal of cross-stanzaic rhyming. He rhymes with broad flexibility, though he frequently, feintingly suggests that he plans to proceed otherwise. Time and again (by my estimate, there are more than a hundred such examples), he opens a new section as though he were going to adopt terza rima. The initial stanza's first and third lines will rhyme, as will its second line and the first line of the next stanza. But then—almost invariably after four lines—he snaps the pattern and begins rhyming catch-as-catch-can. (Why he has chosen this particular juncture as his breaking point, and has stuck to it so faithfully, remains something of a conundrum—one of many formalistic puzzles woven into "Omeros." I was similarly mystified by his decision, in an otherwise uneventful passage deep in the middle of the poem, to run twenty-four "L" rhymes in twenty-seven lines: vertical / skull / smell / swell / idle / sail / middle / supple / gunwale / skill, and so on. As you would expect, the music shifts from lilting to leaden—but you're never sure why Walcott has brought the change about.)



Minute scrutiny of this sort might seem finicky but for the matchless variety and inventiveness of Walcott's rhymes; the care he has manifestly lavished upon them solicits our closest attention. In any poem of this length you would expect to find a range of rhyme types, if only because the customary prototype—exact rhyme—can become constraining or monotonous over time. But Walcott extends himself far beyond all foreseen deviations. A teacher of versification might well employ "Omeros" as a rhyme casebook. Here, in addition to exact masculine and feminine rhymes, one encounters triple rhymes (gentility / humility) and visual rhymes (plough / enough) and pararhymes or rim rhymes (often coming in strings: nose / canoes / noise) and anagrammatic rhymes (organ / groan) and apocopated rhymes (river / deliverer) and macaronic rhymes (come / *homme*, glory / *mori*) and light rhymes (sea / money) and rime riche (piss / precipice, Raj / mirage) and hosts of intricate couplings—each bearing its own distinctive acoustical qualities—for which, so far as I know, no terms have been coined except that grab-bag designation "off rhyme." (How would one classify, for example, the not quite rime-riche pairings of pier / happier or captains / capstans? Or a blend of visual rhyme and rime riche, like fishpot / depot? Or a hybrid of light rhyme and rim rhyme like egret / great? Or the sort of rhyme—a favorite of Walcott's—in which one word, orthographically speaking, envelopes another, as in brows / burrows or rows / arrows or acre / massacre?)

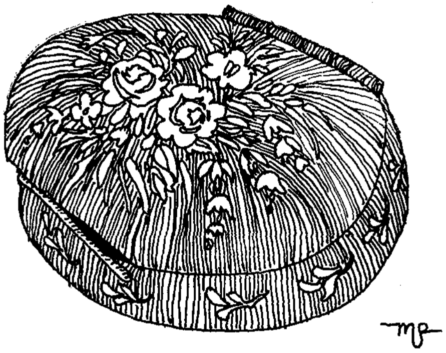
Perhaps the most striking feature in his rhyming is his ready use of outlandish pairings of a sort usually reserved for light verse. When he rhymes "panther" with "and her" or "altar" with "halt. Her" or "Florida" with "worried her" or "hunter" with "front of her," we are closer to W. S. Gilbert or Ogden Nash than to Milton or Spenser. We are perched right at the teetering edge of parody—which is where he wants us. "Omeros" is no sendup of epic traditions—it is no "Rape of the Lock"—but Walcott is keenly attuned to the humble, farcical aspects of his island world, as when his hero Achille, with a touching combination of faith and ignorance, christens his boat In God We Troust.

"Omeros" is a poem of elusive metres. Robert Frost once observed that there are "virtually but two" metres in English—strict iambic and loose iambic. "Omeros" initially looks like an example of the latter, with interspersings of a tighter iambic line. But elsewhere the lines are loosened to a point where the iambic beat disappears, with the result that any systematic attempt to read the poem metrically—with that easy sense of place, that fluid but constant awareness of where you stand within the line, which is the hallmark of solidly metred poetry—must end in frustration. There are simply too many uncertain feet, extra stresses, ambiguous emphases, and so forth, for comfortable processing. Perhaps Walcott would have us take another approach? So many of the lines contain twelve syllables that one is tempted to conclude that he has forgone conventional metrics in favor of purely syllabic verse. However, the uncertainties that attend syllabic count in English, and the reader's difficulties in comprehending such a long syllabic line, make this interpretation problematic. The cadences are powerfully rhythmic, to be sure, and one may decide that Walcott has "captured the music of the sea," or something of the sort, and let the matter drop there—but the lack of an orthodox metre is in fact a crucial, individuating trait. Rhyme—which could not help playing a signal role in "Omeros," given Walcott's ingenuity with it—becomes preëminent in the absence of a clearly felt metre. Rhyme-based rather than metre-based, "Omeros" is a nonesuch among long poems.

One might go as far as to call it rhyme-driven. Over and over, rhymes are what hold the tumbling, pell-mell stanzas together, and since so many of the rhymes are unorthodox and recherché the poem's structure is forever on the verge of being lost. Even more than most verse, "Omeros" demands to be read aloud. When the prosodic underpinnings of a poem consist of rhymes like, say, "coffee" and—some twenty syllables later—"of the," you probably can't depend on your eye alone to catch the buried order that balances the hurly-burly; for this, you probably need actual, spoken echoes lingering in the air. (Here and there, one might describe the poem as rhyme-driven in another sense, for Walcott occasionally allows his appetite for choice rhymes to bend his phrasings or sentence structures. But even in such instances the sheer oddity of his music often diverts the reader from any impression of strained or forced rhyming.) Although one can conceive of a somewhat altered "Omeros" whose faint ghost of an iambic-pentameter line has been expunged and whose metre is purely free, an "Omeros" without rhyme is unthinkable. It would be a different beast altogether.

Writers on English-language prosody generally contend that metre is a fundamental and rhyme a secondary or ornamental tool. But this view, while sound in the main, may distort those unusual poetic imaginations—in our century one thinks immediately of Charlotte Mew and Louis MacNeice and, especially, John Crowe Ransom—for whom metre is often expendable but rhyme remains essential. (Like "Omeros," Ransom's œuvre is imaginable without metre but Ransom wouldn't be Ransom without rhyme.) Such poets usually are demons for brevity. It has been left to Walcott to demonstrate a means by which rhyme—the "invention of a barbarous age," according to Milton—might support a Miltonic macrocosm.

Douglas Wakiihuri, the winner of last year's New York City Marathon, remarked after the race that real fatigue hadn't set in until Mile 20, some three-quarters of the way. Among marathoners, Mile 20 traditionally represents the point of greatest pain and trial and despair, and it is tempting to postulate that among the epic poets—the marathoners of the versifying world—a similar testing ground arrives at about the three-quarters mark. In any case, I had reached approximately that point in my reading of this more-than-three-hundred-page poem when either my own or the poet's energies flagged a little. Somewhere toward the close of "Omeros" the reader sees that its various branches are never going to wind up belonging to a single trunk; and with the knowledge that the poem will remain a thing of disparate parts comes the realization that one can in fairness formulate piecemeal judgments—can conclude, perhaps, that the passages dealing with Plunkett's ancestor could use some trimming, or that Hector's character needs to be clarified. Late in the poem, too, one may weary somewhat of Walcott's penchant for the sweepingly abstract—for big, summational declarations about the nature of time or history or love. Every poetic virtue contains its hazards, obviously, and Walcott's characteristic eagerness to don a sage's getup and utter vatic grandiosities carries the risk that he may at times stumble on his robes, or his beard may slip a bit.



But they're apt to be momentary lapses, these stumblings or slippages, since Walcott wields all kinds of strengths that can bolster a sagging passage in a twinkling. He has a sure, prepossessing vocabulary, a deft and ludic wit ("she was an adamant Eve"), an intricately calibrated ear. He's a man of wonderful analogical talents, especially when he fixes his eye on the natural world. He gives the reader roosters that really crow ("their cries screeching like red chalk / drawing hills on a board"), jellyfish that truly float ("tasselled palanquins of Portuguese man-o'-wars / bobbed like Asian potentates"), swifts that genuinely fly ("this frail dancer / leaping the breakers, this dart of the meridian"). And he's better than wonderful—he's little short of miraculous—when he stirs up some weather. The hurricane he brews in an early chapter is so splendidly overmastering that a reader is left feeling dazed, windblown, waterlogged. If to read "Omeros" is to sign on for a substantial voyage during which small doubts are constantly raised and quelled, raised and quelled—well, what long poem of our time can be read without misgivings or objections? Who doesn't find elements to quarrel with or quibble about in John Berryman's "The Dream Songs" or James Merrill's "The Changing Light at Sandover"? And who, even so, is any the less grateful to their makers?

So bright and immediate are many of Walcott's local virtues that one can lose sight of the lowering darkness of "Omeros." Not until I'd set the book down, the journey completed, did it become clear what an unbroken line of woes it enfolds. Maud Plunkett is not the only one whose life ends sadly: Hector dies in an accident; the midshipman falls in combat while still a boy. And, year by year, political corruption cankers the island's soul, pollution threatens its beauty. There is a loud call of anguish at the center of "Omeros," but the book is something more—something better—than a simple cry from the heart. It's a complex cry from the heart, for Walcott has succeeded in filtering all sorts of titanic sorrows through a limpid and ferocious intellect. —BRAD LEITHAUSER

## BRIEFLY NOTED

### FICTION

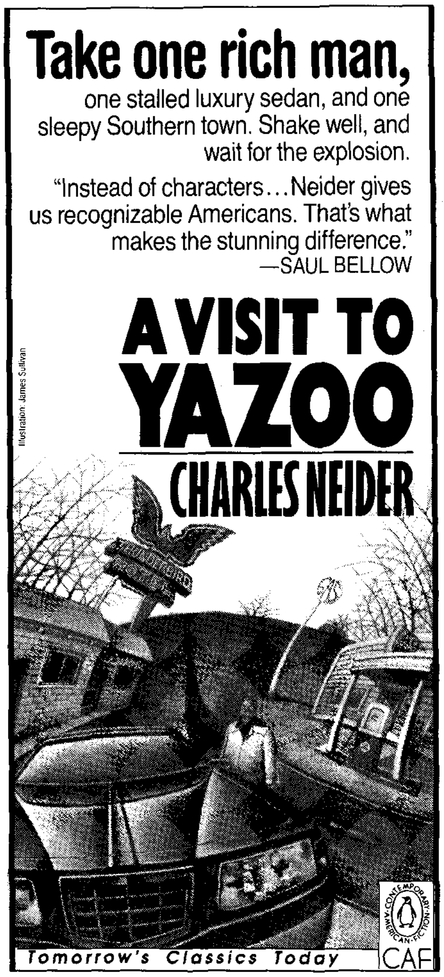
A DANGEROUS WOMAN, by Mary McGarry Morris (Viking; $19.95). From the very beginning you are told there will be a murder. You don't know who will kill or be killed, but the candidates are clear: Martha Horgan, town butt and oddball despite pretty looks and a mind adequate to schoolwork; her nagging, social-climbing young aunt, Frances, who married money; Getso, the cheating boyfriend of Birdy, an acquaintance who is kind to Martha and is therefore adored by her; and Mack, a drunken writer who hires out as a carpenter, seduces Martha, and then allows himself to be bought, gigolo style, by Frances. Martha's ambitions are tiny: to work in the cleaner's from which she has been fired, to be friends with Birdy, to be believed. The book is a tour de force in that the author manages to show us how repellent Martha is—when a pleasant young man asks her to dance, she shouts, "I don't want to dance with you!"—and yet keep our sympathies with this girl who was neglected by a widowed father "so seldom acknowledging her that, when they did speak, she would dig her nails into her palms, then race to a light to study the pattern of blue runes in her flesh before they were gone."

THE FOURTH K, by Mario Puzo (Random House; $22). The author did not restrain himself when he assembled the lurid elements of this White House melodrama involving multiple assassinations and a Presidency that devolves into a criminal vehicle for personal vengeance. The man in the Oval Office is not merely Kennedyesque—he is a fictional cousin of J.F.K. There is also a Donald Trump-like tycoon, a Deborah Norvillean female Vice-President, a decadent Middle East sultanate called Sherhaben, and several extravagantly cruel and sexually reptilian terrorists. Unfortunately, the pulp charge of these ingredients has been oddly neutralized by a creaking "Wheel of Fortune" plot and by a tone that is uneasily suspended between satirical and portentous. In the past, Mr. Puzo's best books, including "The Godfather," have entertained by seeming to confirm our worst suspicions about the way things really work, but "The Fourth K" is an entirely synthetic construction.

### GENERAL

DE GAULLE: THE REBEL, 1890-1944, by Jean Lacouture, translated from the French by Patrick O'Brian (Norton; $29.95). This majestic and illuminating biography survives a mediocre translation and inept copy editing. Readers who persist will discover that the man "les Anglo-Saxons" found so abrasive had been chafing his military superiors from the moment (1912) he graduated from Saint-Cyr, amid the faculty's encomiums. De Gaulle's rebelliousness was justifiable, because, as the author makes clear, French military doctrines were misguided: in 1914, faith in offensive warfare pitted bayonets against machine guns, and in 1940 belief in defense opposed a mobile enemy with static fortifications. De Gaulle's military insight was linked to an obsessional, romantic patriotism, which forbade him to accept the defeat that French military policy had earned. This is the first of two volumes, and when it closes, after the liberation of Paris, de Gaulle is triumphant and a hero. His grandeur is incontestable; if our admiration is qualified, the reason is that in the twentieth century de Gaulle's ideology—patriotism—does not seem to be enough.

ROAD TO DIVORCE: ENGLAND, 1530-1987, by Lawrence Stone (Oxford; $29.95). In the sixteen-forties, John Milton argued that divorce should be granted any time a marriage fell apart, but English law took centuries to embrace the concept. England's quirky break from Roman Catholicism left it the only Protestant land to bar divorce, and much of Mr. Stone's book examines the ways people evaded this ban. Couples without property could separate and even remarry with little fear of prosecution; the rich could secure a divorce by special act of Parliament. Parliamentary divorce was a tawdry process, since proof of the wife's adultery was required, but the stakes were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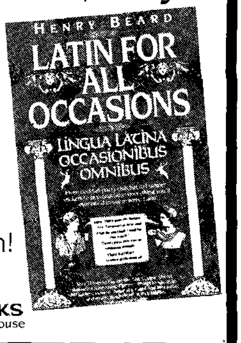

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high. Property was at the heart of most gentry marriages, and primogeniture enabled families to preserve their wealth over generations; thus wifely adultery, by casting doubt on the legitimacy of heirs, threatened the social structure. There is high drama here—accounts of seduction and betrayal, of servants bribed into perjury, of fortune hunters eloping with heiresses—and more than a dollop of farce. Mr. Stone calls England's transformation from a non-divorcing to a divorcing society perhaps the most profound social change of the last five hundred years, and he does a superb job of rooting this change in the soil of common experience. Seldom has first-rate history contained such good gossip.

Growing Up in Boston's Gilded Age: The Journal of Alice Stone Blackwell, 1872-1874, edited by Marlene Deahl Merrill (Yale; $25). Alice Blackwell, whose parents were prominent women's-rights activists, grew up in a Victorian mansion in the Boston suburb of Dorchester. When she was fourteen, she started this diary, "to sift myself out, and find what there is of me," and kept it faithfully for the next two years. She recorded her successes and failures at school, her likes and dislikes (both strong), her reading (voracious), and her thoughts, heavy or frivolous. She tells of encounters with her parents' famous friends (Stephen Foster, William Lloyd Garrison, "Fred" Douglass), and of her disappointment on meeting Louisa May Alcott: along with being "unpleasant looking," she "laces"—that is, she wore a corset, unacceptable among feminists of the time. Alice was an intellectual, but she loved practical jokes and wrestling matches, and she had an abiding common sense. Many years later, as a distinguished journalist and a champion of votes for women, she said in reply to someone who complained that woman suffrage had not, after all, brought about the millennium, "There is a great deal of human nature in women." Photographs and engravings of old Boston.

The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics, by Christopher Lasch (Norton; $25). This vivacious, argumentative essay combines history and sociology in a critique of contemporary political and social theory. Mr. Lasch is dissatisfied with our current versions of left and right, finding that neither offers an accurate understanding of our society or a worthy ideal. He is particularly hard on liberal intellectuals' disdain for their fellow-Americans, and would like to rehabilitate the American populist tradition—the values and beliefs of small, independent proprietors and artisans—and what he deems the underrated virtues of the lower middle class. As he romps through the centuries from St. Augustine to the present, Mr. Lasch, like many debaters, tends to highlight his opponents' weaknesses and so, perhaps, do less than justice to their thought. The book is stimulating, though what it principally stimulates is skepticism about the pretensions of all social theory, including the author's.

When the World Was Whole: Three Centuries of Memories, by Charles Fenyvesi (Viking; $19.95). The family of the author's mother, the Schwarczes, flourished for generations in Hungary—at no time more fruitfully than in the long reign of the Emperor Franz Josef—until the nineteen-forties, when the Nazis decimated Central European Jewry. Mr. Fenyvesi, a journalist in Washington, D.C., recaptures the life of his land-owning, land-loving, and, with some exceptions, devout forebears by singling out picturesque members of the Schwarcz clan and telling their stories. There is his patriarchal grandfather, a rich man whose careful husbandry was almost an act of devotion; the grandfather's wife, the gentle Róza, who perished at Auschwitz; and their daughters and sons—particularly the dashing Uncle Mishi, a bon vivant who loved women and Gypsy music. This is an unassuming chronicle, whose modesty cloaks a brilliant narrative gift. Illustrated with many family photographs.

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### THE BUREAUCRATIC MIND AT WORK

[*From the Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988*]

(34)(A) Paragraph (7) of section 103(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Tax Reform Act of 1986) is amended by striking out "necessary" and inserting in lieu thereof "necessary."

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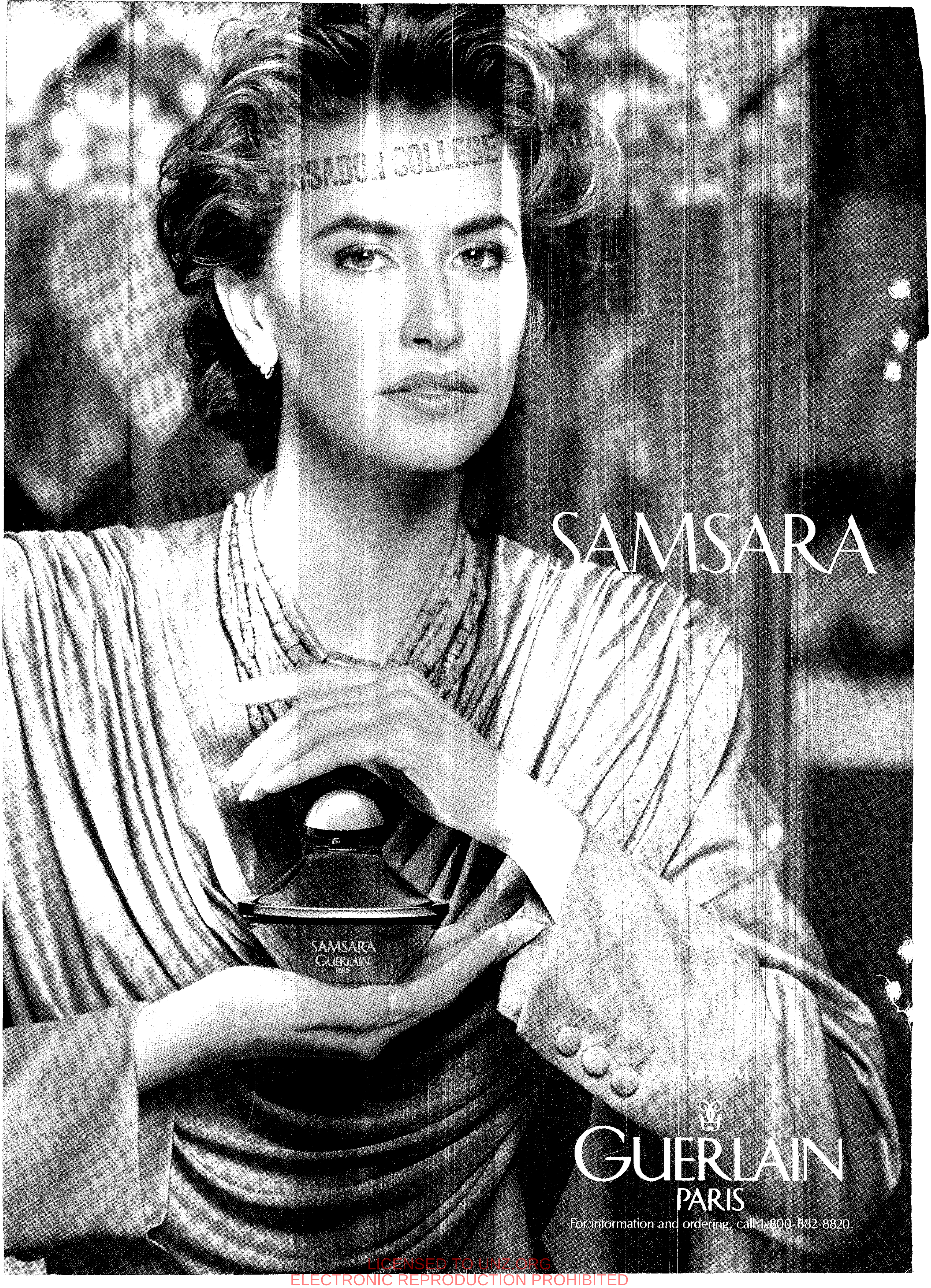

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